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# PLUCK AND LUCK

## THE BOY TENDERFOOT OR THE OUTLAWS of CROOKED CANYON AND OTHER STORIES

By An Old Scout



In a minute or so she was standing safely on the ledge, and then down came the rope again. "Hook on!" called out Bowler, and Ben did so. Then, with the assistance of Net, he was hauled up.

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# PLUCK AND LUCK

## Stories of Adventure

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# THE BOY TENDERFOOT

— OR —

## THE OUTLAWS OF CROOKED CANYON

By AN OLD SCOUT

### CHAPTER I.

#### TAMING A BULLY.

"Dance, you red-headed sinner, dance! Whoopee! Step up lively now! Beat that, or I'll commence to shoot your shoes full of lead! I'm Dangerous Dan, the Dandy Duck of Deadwood, and when I shout I always mean something!"

The scene was in Deadwood, Dakota, in the early days of that great mining camp, which is now a city of no mean note.

The person who made the above remarks was a tall, raw-boned man of thirty, who had more than one scar upon a very evil-looking face.

He stood a few feet from a stagecoach, which had stopped in front of the leading hotel of Deadwood to unload its passengers, a huge Colt's revolver in either hand.

Half a dozen people had alighted from the dust-covered vehicle, and to one of them, a lanky-looking chap with a shock of red hair, the remarks were addressed.

The red-haired man had all the appearances of being fresh from a farm in the East. It was almost a foregone conclusion that he had just arrived in the West and was anything but pleased with his reception.

But, though he was not used to the way they did things out there, he was not a coward.

"I can't dance," he said, persuasively. "What d'ye want to try to make me fur? I hain't done nothin' to you. Point them shooters the other way, won't you? They might go off."

There was a loud guffaw from half a dozen rough-looking men who stood in front of the one-story structure that was called a hotel.

It was evident that the words of Dangerous Dan, the Dandy Duck of Deadwood, pleased them greatly, or more likely it was that they feared him, and laughed because they knew he expected them to.

"What! You can't dance?" roared the Dandy Duck. "Why, I never yet seed a man as couldn't dance when I ordered him to. Git in there, now! Mebbe that'll start yer!"

There was the crack of a revolver, and the bullet tore up a piece of ground within an inch of the Eastern man's right foot.

The rest of the passengers scattered, and then realizing that there was nothing left for him to do, the man started to dance the best he knew how.

He had just started to get in pretty lively work when the last of the passengers stepped out of the stagecoach.

He was a mere boy, not over eighteen at the most, and he was attired in a neat suit of clothes and wore a derby hat.

Boy that he was, there was something very manly about him. Handsome and well formed, and of the average height and weight for one of his years, he was bound to create a favorable impression from the casual observer.

But the Dandy Duck was not one who might be called a casual observer. He was a big, brawny man—a bully of the regular Western style of those days.

Imagine, then, his surprise when the boy, in a ringing voice, exclaimed:

"Leave that man alone, why don't you?"

If some one had sent a pistol-shot past his ear the big bully could not have been more astonished.

"What in thunder is this?" he cried out, in a voice that sounded more like that of a wild bull than anything else. "A tenderfoot, as I live! And—Jerusalem! a boy at that!"

A deep hush came over the whole crowd.

Even the rough-looking miners who stood in front of the hotel felt sorry for the boy who had dared to interfere in the sport of Dandy Duck.

They looked pityingly when the bully strode a couple of steps toward the neatly-dressed boy, ignoring the red-headed man entirely now.

They thought there would be a couple of shots fired, and then the funeral of another innocent tenderfoot would take place that afternoon.

But even such men as they are sometimes treated to great surprises.

As the big man stepped forward with a revolver in either hand, a shooter suddenly appeared in the hand of the boy.

"Go and take a quiet walk, Mr. Dandy Duck," he said calmly. "I have heard all about such men as you. I'll bet that you are the biggest piece of bluff in all Deadwood. Move, now, or I'll begin to practise on you with my gun! I'll show you that a New York boy knows how to shoot as well as you."

The bully gave a gasp that was plainly heard by all present.

The passengers who had just emerged from the vehicle seemed to be pleased, while the regulars who hung about the hotel were almost dumfounded.

"Wha-a-a-t!" cried Dangerous Dan. "Why, I'll——"

He made a move as though to level one of his weapons at the boy, but a sharp report rang out, and it dropped from his hand to the ground.

He had been shot on the very tip of his forefinger, just as it was about to press the trigger of his own revolver.

A howl of pain and rage came from his lips, and then he was quick enough to discharge his other gun.

But luckily for the boy who had been called a tenderfoot, the bullet merely grazed the sleeve of his coat.

He did not seem to mind it in the least, and then he fired three shots in rapid succession, just as though he was simply trying to see how fast he could shoot.

One bullet struck the forefinger on the other hand of the Dandy Duck, one went through the top of his hat, and the other hit the heel of his boot.

The result was that the Dandy Duck dropped his other revolver and tumbled to the ground, rolling over and over as though he was badly wounded.

"Get up, you big coward!" exclaimed the boy. "You are not hurt. Get up and dance! Get up, I say! I made up

my mind before I started for Deadwood that I was going to make the first fellow I met like you do the dancing-act himself. Hurry now!"

Then something happened that the rough miners standing about never forgot.

The big bully actually got upon his feet, and then, with the blood dripping from his fingers' ends, he danced for the amusement of the crowd to the time the boy tenderfoot gave him by swinging his revolver back and forth.

For fully three minutes it was kept up, and then the boy fired a shot that lodged a bullet into the heel of the boot that had not been touched, and motioned for the dancer to stop.

"That will do, Mr. Dangerous Dan. Please make yourself scarce. The next time you meet a tenderfoot use him as you would be used yourself, in case you went East. I am glad I met you."

As these words came from the lips of the boy from New York, the bully turned without a word and slunk from the spot, while the men, who had been afraid of him till a few minutes before, laughed derisively.

"I am much obliged to you," observed the red-headed man, stepping up and shaking hands with the daring young fellow who had dared to take up for him. "What mought your name be?"

"My name is Ben Bascom, and I am from New York," was the quick reply. "I came out here to try and make some money at hunting for gold-dust; but before I came I studied a little on Western life from books and story papers, and that is why I went for the bully who just tried to have a whole lot of fun with you. Anybody who was a real man would not have attempted such a trick on strangers from the East, you know, and that is why I tamed him down. He might lay for me in the dark and try to put me under for what I have done, but he don't dare to face me and open up the ball."

"Gosh! I believe you are right. Hurrah for ther boy tenderfoot, gentlemen! Ben Bascom is what I call the genuine article."

A cheer went up such as had not been heard in a long time in that locality, and the majority of the witnesses to the affair rushed up to shake hands with the boy in the natty rig.

The young New Yorker had certainly made a good impression on his advent into Deadwood.

## CHAPTER II.

### BEN SIZES UP DEADWOOD.

Ben Bascom was one of those reckless, honest, fearless, lucky fellows, of which there are so many in this great and glorious land.

Born and reared in New York City, he, of course, knew considerable of the ways of the world.

All sorts and conditions drift to New York, and Ben at the age of twelve had been able to pick out a new arrival and name the part of the country he came from.

Probably this was because he was more or less of a student of human nature; but it might be that the reading of all sorts of stories of adventure helped him out considerable.

At any rate, when he set out for Deadwood, Dakota, to make his fortune, he made such a study of life in the West that he thought he would be able to get along all right.

Ben's father had died when he was very young, and but two years before the opening of our story his mother had been buried over in Greenwood.

Left without a cent, for it took all there was to pay the funeral expenses, Ben had been working his way through life the best he knew how.

But finally one day, when he received a letter from his uncle, Gil Patterson, who was in Dakota doing a pretty successful gold-mining business, the boy's hopes ran away up.

And no wonder, for his uncle wanted him to come out and work for him.

Ben was making a bare six dollars per week at the time, and jumped at the offer.

All he had to do was to accept the offer and his uncle would send him the price of a ticket to come West.

He was not long in answering, you may believe, and in due time the money came, together with a little advice.

"Come direct to Deadwood," the letter read. "If any one tries to bully you, don't let them do it. Nerve is the thing that is required out here to make a success of it. You will

meet some pretty rough sort of men on your way, and some of them will try to make out that they are awful bad. Don't let them scare you; if they go to shoot at you, you shoot first. If you are anything like your father was you ought to make a regular Westerner in a short time. If you don't know how to handle a shooter you had better learn at once. Now, as I have given you all the directions how to get here, you just come right through, and when you get to Deadwood inquire for your uncle,  
GIL PATTERSON."

Those instructions were quite enough for Ben, and the reader knows how well he carried them out when he got out of the stage in the famous mining camp.

Ben picked up the rather modest-looking grip he had placed on the ground when the circus started, and walked into the hotel, followed closely by the red-haired man.

"My name is Whistler—Bill Whistler," said that individual, touching the boy on the arm. "I want to know you. What's your name?"

"Benjamin Bascom was the way I was christened, but I am generally called Ben," was the reply.

"Good enough, Ben! Let's shake on it. I'll never forget you for interferin' in that feller's fun. By gum! but he did make me dance, though."

"Yes, and I made him dance," said our hero. "I kept looking for a man like him from the time I got anywhere West, and I did not strike him till I got here at the end of my journey."

"You was lookin' for a feller like him?"

"Yes; I have always understood that the West was pretty full of such fellows, and, do you know, I was really anxious to meet one of them."

"You are about the toughest tenderfoot that ever struck Deadwood!" exclaimed the proprietor of the shanty hotel, who had been listening to the conversation. "You are right up to snuff, my boy, but ther name as was first given yer is bound to stick to yer as long as you stay around these diggin's."

"And that name is——"

"Ther Boy Tenderfoot."

"Well, I shan't object; that is as good as any other name. Say, landlord, do you know a man by the name of Gil Patterson?"

"Gil Patterson? Well, I reckon that I do. Are you lookin' for him?"

"Yes; he is my uncle."

"He is, hey? Well, no wonder you are sich a nervy youngster! You take somewhat after Gil. So you are Gil's nephew, hey? Well, he's one of ther best friends I've got, and I'm going to set 'em up on ther strength of you bein' his nephew. What'll you have?"

"I don't think you have anything here that I'd care to drink, unless it is a glass of water," and Ben made a sweeping glance at the back bar.

"We've got ther best corn whisky that kin be got in this part of ther country."

"Well, I never drink anything strong, so you will have to leave me out."

"No, I won't, neither. I'll tell yer what I'll do. I've got a few bottles of pear cider stowed away, an' I'll open one of 'em, see if I don't."

Before the boy could say anything more the landlord ran to the rear of the building.

In a minute or two he returned with a quart bottle; the cork was pulled, and a thick, old-fashioned glass was filled.

Then the landlord told the bartender to set 'em up for all hands, which was promptly done, though about half the men had to wait till the others drank, owing to the fact that there were not sufficient glasses to accommodate all hands at one time.

Ben tasted of the drink that had been poured out for him, and found that it really was nothing more than cider. But it was pretty strong, for all that, and he made up his mind that he would not drink any more than one.

There were probably about twenty men in the place, including those of the stagecoach passengers who had dropped in, and some of them insisted on doing it again.

But Ben did not take any more, the landlord helping him out by saying that "If ther boy tenderfoot didn't want any more, it hadn't oughter be forced on him."

After a while the landlord, whose name was "Soapy George," or rather that was the name he went by, directed Ben Bascom to the claim of Gil Patterson, and bidding the crowd good-afternoon, our hero went out.

As he left the shanty he turned around and read the sign on the front.

The Bull's-Eye Hotel, was what was inscribed upon it in letters that were not altogether even, but plain enough for all that.

Ben started in the direction he had been told to go, taking in his surroundings as he walked along.

The town, if it really could be called such, was made up of one-story shanties and tents. There were plenty of gin-mills, and one or two supply stores, also a post-office.

Everything seemed to be on the move, too. The miners were working away on their claims in their supreme desire to get rich.

It was only a short distance to the claim of Ben's uncle, and when he thought he must be about there he suddenly came upon two men who were engaged in a very earnest conversation.

One of the men was Dangerous Dan, the Dandy Duck of Deadwood, and the boy quickly placed his hand on the butt of his revolver.

### CHAPTER III.

#### BEN MEETS RECKLESS NET NEWPORT.

The instant the eyes of Dangerous Dan fell on Ben he pulled his gun.

A fierce scowl came over his ugly visage, and without a word he began to shoot.

Our hero was still a good distance from him, and the fact that the other man was in the way caused him to refrain from firing.

But the man was quick to take in the situation, and he got out of the way in no time.

Ben had not been hit, and with a great degree of coolness he sent a shot at the big coward.

The bullet struck him in the fleshy part of the right arm, and his revolver dropped to the ground.

But he quickly drew his other one with the left hand, and raised it to shoot again.

Crack! This time Ben winged him in the shoulder, and down he went with a groan.

"You cowardly cur!" cried the young New Yorker. "If you are not dead you ought to be, though I don't want the blood of any fellow creature on my hands."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the man who had been looking on. "That is the best I have seen in some time. Who in thunder are you, youngster?"

"I have just been nicknamed the Boy Tenderfoot," replied Ben; "but my regular handle is Benjamin Bascom."

"What! Just say that again, won't you?"

"I said my name was Benjamin Bascom. I just got here from the East."

"Well, I'll be shot for a coyote!" observed the man, stepping forward with the agility of a man much younger than he was. "Why, bless me! You are my nephew! I'm your uncle, Gil Patterson."

"Good! I was looking for you, uncle. I am real glad to meet you," and Ben put out his hand, which was gripped by the horny fist of the Deadwood miner.

"Well, this is what I call too good for anything!" said the miner, and he turned and looked at the squirming form of Dangerous Dan, grinning broadly as he did so. "I wouldn't have believed it was in you, that's what I wouldn't. What was the trouble between you an' the Dandy Duck, anyway?"

"We had a little squabble as I got out of the stage-coach back there, and I rather got the best of him. He wasn't satisfied, it seems, and he started in to lay me low when he saw me coming. I hope I haven't killed him."

"Oh, no danger of that, I guess. You winged him pretty good, though, an' the chances are that he won't bother you for a while. Let's see what you've done to him, anyway."

Patterson walked over to where the big bully lay, just as half a dozen men came along and stopped to see what the trouble was.

"It's nothin' to speak of," said Patterson to the miners. "The Dandy Duck got laid out by a boy tenderfoot—that's all."

An examination showed that Dangerous Dan's wounds were not serious. That in his shoulder was a mere flesh wound, as the bullet had glanced off. A bullet had passed through the fleshy part of the forearm, just missing the bone, and this would be the longest to heal.

Ben Bascom was very glad when he heard this. He did not want to have the blood of the villain on his hands. He had not come West for the purpose of killing any one; he had come to make money.

But he meant to take his own part, though, even if he had to drop some one.

Things were different in those days, and in Deadwood and other places of the kind a man or two was shot almost every day, and nothing was thought of it.

The wounded bully was assisted to his shanty, he going away without saying a word.

But Ben could tell from the look in his evil eye that he was not done yet.

"I'll have to be on the lookout for that fellow," he said to his uncle. "He means to do me, and he will either kill me or I will have to lay him low for good."

"The next time he tackles you give it to him for fair! Aim right for his heart if you've got time. He ain't no good, anyway, an' never was. He don't do any work, an' it is a mystery where he gits his spendin' money from."

Gil Patterson could use pretty good language if he wanted to, but he could not help drifting into the rough, rather uncouth way the people of that section generally spoke.

As we have said, Ben Bascom had made a pretty good study of the West from the books and papers he had read, and he had not made any mistake in his ideas of it. He had heard the old saying that "When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do," and he meant to follow it up while he was in Dakota.

His uncle took him to the neat little shanty he occupied as a home, and told him that here was where he could hang up and assist in keeping bachelor's hall.

Our hero had been used to that sort of living ever since his mother died, so it was nothing at all new to him.

"I guess we will make out all right, Uncle Gil," he said. "I am pretty easy to get along with, I think."

"An' you'll find me just that kind of a cuss, too, my boy. I sent for you to come out to these diggin's, an' I am goin' to see to it that you strike it rich. I'm doin' purty fair, for an old feller, an' I'm havin' lots of excitement, which is a thing that I'm very fond of. If it wasn't for excitement, what would be the use of livin'? You'll say so yourself afore you've been here a month."

"If the Dandy Duck don't put an end to me before that time," laughed the boy.

"I don't think he will do it, from what I've seen of you. It strikes me that you know how to handle a shooter as well as ther majority of cusses. Where did you learn, my boy?"

"In the back yard of the house I lived in," answered Ben. "I learned with a seven-shot, twenty-two caliber pistol. When I got so I could handle that good at steady shooting, I started in the quick way. To-day is the first I ever shot such a heavy revolver as a thirty-eight. I knew it would jump a little, so I allowed for it, and I struck it just right for every bullet went just where I wanted it to go."

"You are a good one, but there's no reason why you shouldn't be a little better. Come out back here. There's plenty of time before supper; let's practise a little."

Back of the shanty there was a little gorge which ran through a bank of rock and clay like a huge split in a giant tree.

There was a stream of water running through it, and by the brook there was a well-beaten path which ran straight for perhaps a hundred yards, and then turned abruptly to the left with the gorge itself.

"There is a sort of valley in back there," explained Patterson. "That's where my claim, which is one of the biggest payin' ones in the diggin's, is located. See that stump over there? Let's see how many bullets you kin put in it, and let's see how fast you kin do it."

Out came the boy's revolver in the twinkling of an eye, and almost before the words were out of the mouth of his uncle he was shooting at the stump.

Five times he fired, and then his weapon was empty. "Good!" cried Patterson. "You hit it four times. That's what I call mighty good shootin'!"

"I should say it was!" exclaimed the voice of a female, and turning around suddenly, Ben Bascom beheld a pretty girl of seventeen attired in a fancy riding costume of the sort used in that part of the country. She was mounted on a chunky gray pony, and appeared perfectly at ease.

"It's only Reckless Net Newport, Ben!" exclaimed Patterson. "Don't look so astonished like. She won't run away with you!"

## CHAPTER IV.

## RECKLESS NET IS TAKEN AT A DISADVANTAGE.

To Ben Bascom the girl on horseback seemed to be a veritable apparition of loveliness.

Her dark, wavy hair hung over her shoulders and glistened in the rays of the declining sun with a dazzling effect.

Her face and form was a picture that any artist could paint without having to overdo the matter. There was just the tinge of olive in her complexion, and her red cheeks and cherry lips, together with her even, pearly teeth made the picture complete.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Patterson!" she exclaimed, in a voice that was as clear as a bell. "May I ask who the young stranger is? He seems to know how to handle a shooter, though he wasn't reared around these diggings, I'll bet."

"This is my nephew, Ben Bascom, from New York," answered Patterson. "Ben, this is Miss Newport."

"I am glad to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance, Miss Newport," said our hero, blushing like a young schoolboy, as he tipped his derby and bowed to the girl.

"And I am glad to become acquainted with you," was the reply. "You are the third person I ever saw who came from New York. I hope you won't leave as soon as they did, though, for I like your looks, to tell the truth."

"So the other two New Yorkers left here, then?" asked Ben, becoming interested at the young lady's frank way of talking.

"Yes; one of them left suddenly one night, because he held four aces when another man had four kings and an ace. He's buried in Dead Man's Hollow, just the other side of the hill over there."

"She is a genuine girl of the wild and woolly West," thought Ben. "My! but I am real glad I have met her." Then aloud he said:

"And what made the other New Yorker leave, Miss Newport?"

"Oh, the boys made a sieve out of him one night, because he made a mistake and tried to ride another man's horse out of town," was the reply.

"Well, if I should leave Deadwood suddenly I hardly think it will be for such causes as you mention. I came out here at the invitation of my uncle, and I expect to work and attend strictly to business."

"I guess you have been attending to it pretty well since you have been here. I heard about your arrival in town, and how you made the Dandy Duck dance. You are about the slickest thing in the line of a tenderfoot I have seen so far. I thought you was the party the moment I set eyes on you a minute ago. Where did you learn to shoot so good?"

"Oh, I practised considerably at home in New York. You see, I had heard about this part of the country, and knew that any one who couldn't shoot straight was not of much account out here."

"Well, that is right, sure enough. I believe you can shoot as well as I can. Let me see if I can hit that stump four times out of five."

A revolver flashed in her hand, and five shots rang out in quick succession.

Four times the bark and rotten wood flew from the stump, the fifth shot going about two inches above it and lodging in the bank.

"That's as good as you did," said the Western miss, with something like a ring of satisfaction in her voice. "Now, let's see what you can do, Mr. Patterson."

"I reckon I kin do about as good," spoke up the miner, and then he started in.

"You did better," nodded Reckless Net. "You hit the stump every shot. Now, what do you say if we try it over again?"

"I am satisfied," answered Ben.

"So am I," spoke up his uncle.

"Well, we will put up a new target, then," and the girl dismounted with the agility of a cat, and running over to the bank picked up a round stone about the size of a man's head and placed it on the stump.

She stepped off about fifteen paces, and then opened fire on the target.

When the chambers of her revolver were empty there were five spots on the stone, all close toward the center of it.

"That's pretty good," observed Patterson. "You can't beat that much, Ben."

"No," replied our hero, as he walked over to where the girl

stood. "I hardly think any one could beat that. Well, here goes!"

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack! It seemed that he fired a trifle faster than Reckless Net, and when he was through Patterson walked over and examined the stone.

The side had been reversed, and there, sure enough, were five bullet-marks.

"Jingo!" exclaimed the miner. "That couldn't be any better. Now let's see if I can do as good."

The marks were wiped off, and then he tried.

He hit the stump once and the stone four times.

"I'll give in," he said. "You both can shoot better than I can. Ben Bascom, you will do all right. Net, you have been improving, too."

"I have been practising a little the past few days," was the girl's reply. "That fancy looking gambler who has been hanging around here of late said something to me the other day that I did not like. He told me that the next time he met me alone he was going to kiss me. If he dares to try it you can make up your mind he will never handle another poker deck. I will shoot right at his head, just as I did at that stone."

"That's right, Net. Don't take an insult from such a cuss as he is. He is no good, anyway. I've got my suspicions that he ain't just what he makes out to be. He is here for a day, an' then he is missing for a day or two. No one knows where he goes, either. But almost every time he is away we hear of a stage-coach bein' held up, or somethin' o' the kind."

Ben took all this in with much interest. He was anxious to learn all he could about Deadwood and its surroundings, and also get a line on the inhabitants, so he would know who was who.

Incidentally, he made up his mind that he would like to be around when the gambler tried to kiss Reckless Net.

"The idea of a man insulting her," he thought. "Why, any one who would do it ought to be shot."

The girl passed a few more words with them, and then mounting her horse rode off.

She crossed the open stretch in front of Patterson's shanty, and then headed for a distant part of the town, where she lived with her family in a snug little one-story dwelling built of logs.

Her home was at least a mile from the scattered group of shanties that constituted the place called Deadwood, and the country that she had to pass through was quite wild.

But the distance was short, and, besides, Reckless Net Newport was not afraid, anyway.

When the girl was about half way home, a horse and rider suddenly appeared from behind a clump of trees, and a command for her to halt rang out.

The girl obeyed almost before she knew what she was doing.

"Ha! my pretty one!" exclaimed a voice she thought she had heard before. "I am really glad to meet you. Don't reach for your gun, now, for if you do I will drop you from the saddle just the same as I would a man."

Reckless Net saw that the muzzle of a revolver in the hand of the masked man was leveled straight at her breast, and she thought it best to do exactly as he said.

She had been taken at a disadvantage—that was all.

The masked rider gave a low whistle, and then half a dozen horsemen appeared on the scene, and almost before the girl was aware of it she had been seized, and was being borne off toward the hills.

## CHAPTER V.

## HANDSOME JIM.

As soon as Reckless Net Newport had disappeared in the distance, Gil Patterson turned to Ben Bascom and said:

"Now, my boy, I guess we had better go into the house and see about gettin' supper an' fixin' up a bunk for you. The gal has gone, an' with her goes my best wishes. She's admired by every one out in these diggin's, but there's never yet come a man that made any impression on her; they're all alike, so long as they are civil to her. You heard what she said about the fancy gambler? Well, as I said, he ain't no good, an' I wouldn't give much for his chances if he attempts to kiss her when he meets her alone. She'll riddle him, as sure as your name is Ben Bascom."

"She seems to be a remarkable girl," replied our hero. "Was she born and raised out here?"

"No, she wasn't born in these diggin's; she was born in Wyoming, an' she came here with her father an' mother about six months ago. Oh, she is a genuine Western girl—you kin bet your life on that!"

"I know that. She is quite different from the girls of the East; but, for all that, I believe she is just as good as the best of them."

"Yes, you may gamble on that proposition, my boy. There ain't a finer girl as ever breathed than Net Newport."

The two now went into the house, and under the direction of the old miner quarters were soon fixed up for Ben.

It was now past six o'clock, and our hero was pretty hungry from his long journey in the stage-coach.

There was nothing at all fancy about the meal that his uncle prepared, but it was wholesome food, and the way Ben did justice to it showed how well he appreciated it.

"I'll start you right in at work to-morrer, Ben," said Patterson, after the meal had been cleared away and he had lighted his pipe.

"I'll be ready," replied the boy from New York. "You'll find me willing enough, I guess."

"There's lots of wealth out in these diggin's, my boy, an' I am goin' to put you in the way of gittin' your share of it. I've got a neat little sum stowed away a good many miles from ther Black Hills, I kin tell you."

"I am glad to know that you have made out well, uncle. How long have you been here in the hills?"

"Ever since the gold fever started. You see, I was one of the first. I was right out here scoutin' for a rigiment, an' when I heard of ther gold that was bein' found I give up botherin' with ther redskins and landed right here on this very spot. I've been doin' well ever since."

"You think there is plenty of gold out here, then?"

"Plenty of it! Why, ther Black Hills are full of it! More than will be dug out in ther next thousand years. You'll find out all about it, most likely, afore many days."

"But every one don't have luck out here, uncle. Is not that a fact?"

"Yes. You know some people couldn't find a lump of gold if it was right in front of their eyes. It's their nature; they must be born unlucky, I guess. But say, what's the matter with us takin' a walk to ther town proper, as some call it—I mean where ther stage-coach put you out when you arrived?"

"I'll be glad to go with you. I want to get acquainted with the place just as quick as I can."

A few minutes later the two were walking toward the "Bull's-Eye," as Patterson called it.

"'Tain't what you'd call a hotel," he said; "but it is a putty good sort of a place for Deadwood. There are worse ones than it, you know."

"Oh, I guess it is all right," replied the boy. "I didn't expect to find a big city when I came out here."

Though it was still early in the evening the miners were coming into town in full force.

They had finished their day's work, and now the majority of them were looking for enjoyment.

Every hotel was little more than a gambling den, but that was what they were supposed to be.

If gambling were not allowed in them they would not be patronized.

Ben still wore his rather stylish-looking suit of clothes, and as he walked into the barroom of the Bull's-Eye with his uncle he became the object of all eyes.

There were some there who had seen how he had made the Dandy Duck dance, and there were others who had not seen him before; they had not even heard of him.

Gil Patterson appeared to be pretty much of a favorite with the men, for nearly all of them had a friendly word for him when he came in.

To these the old miner introduced Ben as his nephew from the East, who had come out to the diggings to grow up with the country.

"He's been nicknamed the Boy Tenderfoot, pards," he observed; "but he is just the red-hottest tenderfoot that ever struck Deadwood, to my thinkin'! I don't say this because he is a relative of mine; I'm talkin' of what I've seen him do since he arrove here this afternoon."

Several of Patterson's most intimate friends shook hands with Ben.

But it was quite evident that the majority of the crowd took him to be as innocent as a lamb, a regular city chap, who had never seen a bad man or a dirty Sioux Indian on a spree, and that he knew no more about handling a shooter than he did about washing a pan of gold-bearing gravel.

Ben heard several remarks passed about him, but as none of them signified anything more than pity he paid no attention to them.

"Ben," said his uncle, after they had been in the place perhaps an hour, "I'm goin' ter take a hand at poker. I like the game a whole lot, but I want to tell you right here that I don't want you to ever play it; it is no good for you, an', besides, unless you are mighty lucky it will make a beggar of you. You kin watch me play, though, 'cause I never allow myself to lose a great deal, an' when I do lose I generally kin afford it."

"All right," replied the boy, not a little amused at his uncle's remarks. "I'll promise you that I won't play the game as long as I am with you. I never have gambled, and I don't propose to begin now."

Patterson led the way into a back room, where there were three tables.

Two of them were in use by miners, who had dropped in to lose or win the amount of their day's earnings.

The other had only one man sitting at it, and he appeared to be waiting for some one to come in and play.

This man Ben had seen enter the place but a few minutes before.

He was a dark, handsome man of perhaps thirty, and wore a neat-fitting suit of buckskin trimmed with bright yellow fringe. On his hat was a Mexican sombrero, around which was a red ribbon for a band.

He nodded pleasantly to Patterson, and then looked at Ben rather quizzically.

"That's ther chap Reckless Net said she was going to let daylight through if he tried to kiss her," whispered the miner to our hero.

Ben nodded.

Then he did not have much of an opinion of the fellow.

"He's a bad man," he thought. "I shall watch him, for I have an idea that he is a cheat."

Two more men came in just then, and Patterson sat down with them at the table.

"Gentlemen," said Handsome Jim, for that was the name the good-looking gambler went by, "are you ready to begin?"

"Yes," was the reply, and the game started, Ben Bascom an interested spectator.

## CHAPTER VI.

### BEN STARTS OUT TO FIND THE MISSING GIRL.

"Don't you want to take a hand, young fellow?" asked the gambler, as he noticed that Ben took his position behind his uncle, where he could watch his cards.

"No, I never play," replied the boy.

"Oh, you don't! Well, then, please remember that you will have nothing to say about the game, then. Sometimes spectators open their mouths when they ought to keep them closed."

"I rather think I know my business," retorted Ben coolly.

"Well, I am glad of that, then. You see, you are a stranger in these parts, and I thought I would speak to you, so you would not make any mistake."

"You are very kind."

"No offense, youngster."

"All right; go on with your game."

Somehow Handsome Jim appeared to be a little uneasy when it came his turn to deal the cards.

Ben had now taken a position so he could see both his hand and that of his uncle's.

The game went on, however, and the players had varying success.

At the end of an hour Mr. Patterson was about even, and Handsome Jim had lost considerable.

The other players were ahead.

Then the game took a different turn.

The gambler began to win.

Our hero saw him deal himself cards from the bottom of the pack, but he said nothing.

It was done so neatly that nothing but a very sharp eye could have detected the fraud.

To make matters worse for himself, Patterson was drinking altogether too freely.

He began to lose pretty fast, the money either going to Handsome Jim or to a scar-faced man on his left, who, Ben was satisfied, was his confederate.

"Those two are playing together, and they will clean out

uncle and the rest," he thought. "I ought to stop the game, but I don't know as I have any right to."

When Patterson had lost over two hundred dollars, Ben took him by the shoulder and said:

"Come, uncle! What do you say if you take me around and show me some more of the town? You said you were only going to play a few hands when you came in."

"I'm goin' to play just half an hour longer, an' then I'll go with you," was the answer.

The Boy Tenderfoot waited, and when the time was up his uncle had dropped nearly five hundred.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"Not yet," was the reply. "Give me another half hour. I want to get back some of what I have lost."

Patterson was now pretty drunk, and when he was that way he was very obstinate.

He had taken his nephew out to show him the sights of Deadwood, and to be beaten at poker while thus engaged rather nettled him.

He was a pretty good card sharp himself, but Handsome Jim was far his superior.

Ben could see it was not a square game that was being played, but he felt that there was no use in his uncle losing so much money, and he tried to think of a way to stop the game.

Meanwhile the gambler was keeping an eye on our hero. Evidently he knew what was running through his mind.

When ten minutes later Ben again tried to persuade Patterson to quit Handsome Jim turned to him and said:

"Why don't you go and sit down, youngster? Didn't I tell you that you were to keep your mouth closed about the game?"

"I don't propose to stay here any longer and see my uncle robbed of his money!" was the hot reply of the Boy Tenderfoot. "Come, Uncle Gil; let's get out of here. You can't win in that game, for the reason that you will not be allowed to." At this Handsome Jim arose from his chair, and made a move to slap Ben in the face with the flat of his hand.

Then something happened that none of them were prepared to see.

Ben Bascom struck out straight from the shoulder and sent the gambler flat on his back.

The Boy Tenderfoot knew that he was in for a fight now, so he drew his revolver and backed against the wall in a way that showed that he meant business.

Handsome Jim got upon his feet with remarkable quickness. "You young whelp!" he cried, his eyes flashing like those of an enraged wildcat, "I'll fill you full of lead for that!"

"No, you won't," was the calm rejoinder. "Just go easy, now, or you will be the one to get filled with lead!"

Handsome Jim gave a gasp of astonishment as he found himself looking into the muzzle of a revolver.

He had not expected this from the boy, and he knew not what to do.

He stood still for a moment, and then did just the thing that most people would have done under the circumstances. He did nothing.

"Come on, uncle. Are you ready to go?" asked Ben of Patterson, not taking his eyes from those of the gambler.

"Yes," was the quick reply. "I reckon I have got enough for to-night." Then turning to Handsome Jim, he added:

"Ther boy sorter fooled you, didn't he? What do you think of him for a young tenderfoot fresh from New York?"

"He has got the drop on me, so I am willing to let it go at that," answered the villain.

"All right. That settles it. Now I am ready to go, Ben."

Our hero took good care to keep his eye on the gambler as he left the room, though this was hardly necessary, as there were those present who would have filled him with bullet-holes if he had dared to fire on the boy from behind.

There was a certain degree of honor among those men, lawless as they were.

A man who would steal a horse, or shoot another man from behind would be made short work of in Deadwood in those days.

"Uncle Gil, you must excuse me, but I must tell you that you have been drinking a little too much. If you are going to take me around through the rest of the town you must agree to not drink any more whisky."

"All right, my boy. I'll do just as you say."

When they had gone about half the rounds, and were just about to go in the principal supply store, a man hailed Patterson with the remark:

"Hello, Gil! Did you hear about Reckless Net being among

the missing? She never showed up to-night, an' old Lige Newport is pretty nigh wild."

"Didn't show up?" asked the miner. "Why, she was over near my shanty a little before sunset, an' she rode off right in the direction of home."

"That might be, but she never came home, an' she had been here to the store for some bacon for her dad's supper. Lige has got it in his head that ther outlaws of Crooked Canyon have got her. You know they have been makin' themselves heard of pretty good of late."

"Has any one gone to look for her?" queried Ben, who was a deeply interested listener.

"Yes; her dad's got about a dozen men with him lookin' for her."

"Uncle Gil," said the Boy Tenderfoot, turning to Patterson, "have you got a horse to let me have? I am going out to help them find the girl."

"Certainly I've got a good horse, but I didn't know you could ride."

"Oh, I can ride a little. I worked around a big sales stable in New York for a couple of months, and I learned considerable about horses."

"Well, come right home, then, and you kin have the horse at once. I reckon if any one kin find Reckless Net ther Boy Tenderfoot kin."

In less than ten minutes later Ben Bascom was mounted on a mustang pony riding hard in the direction he had seen the girl take late that afternoon.

## CHAPTER VII.

### NET IN THE OUTLAWS' CAVE.

When Reckless Net Newport was seized and overcome by the masked men, a gag was thrust in her mouth the first thing, and her weapons torn from her person.

The stranger who had so suddenly confronted her had thrown her across his horse in front of him, and with his hand tightly clasping her around the waist he rode off at the head of the riders.

Net made a mighty struggle to free herself, but she found it was useless very soon, and gave it up.

The men must have had it all arranged for her capture, as it was done in such a systematic way.

Each one of them had a part to do, and it was all done so quickly that scarcely a moment elapsed before the girl was being borne away in a decidedly helpless state.

It was not more than a minute after her sudden capture before the girl was in possession of all her faculties.

She was wonderfully cool, and could she have talked she most likely would have said some harsh things to her masked abductors.

But the gag prevented her from doing that, so the best she could do was to think.

Reckless Net had heard a great deal about the band of outlaws that were supposed to have a headquarters in Crooked Canyon, a rather wild spot on the road that led into Deadwood from the south, and it struck her that it must be that gang of villains who had got her in their clutches.

She was not nearly as much afraid as the majority of girls would have been under such circumstances; she felt mortified, more than anything else, because she had allowed herself to be caught napping.

When she had satisfied herself that she had a reasonable excuse to offer for being thus caught, she began to think of what she would do toward getting out of the scrape.

After a while she came to the conclusion that the best way out of it was to play the part of a girl who was very much frightened.

So she began to hang on to her captor with a dead weight, to make him believe she had fainted.

On rode the masked men for a distance of probably a mile.

The way was very rough, as it was hardly a trail that they were traversing, though both horses and riders seemed to know the way.

They had entered Crooked Canyon now, a place that was properly named, as it was one of the most crooked canyons to be found anywhere in the Black Hills.

The horses the masked men rode seemed to be thoroughly acquainted with that portion of the country, for they cartered along over the rough, uneven surface, turning first one

way and then another through the almost inky darkness of the canyon.

In some places the way was so narrow that it seemed that they were riding through a tunnel; the cut in the earth was wider at the bottom than at the top.

The captive girl knew something of the canyon, as she had often been in it while hunting, but she had never been far into its depths.

It was one of the wildest spots in all Dakota, and picturesque in the extreme.

And now, as she felt herself carried farther in it, with night fast coming on, Net Newport felt in anything but a comfortable frame of mind.

The darker portion of the canyon was soon traversed, and then when they came out into a space where things were visible to the eye, a sack was thrown over Net's head to shut off her sight.

She still remained limp and motionless, and though the masked leader changed her from one side to the other, she did not show any resistance.

When about two miles from the place where she had been held up and captured had been covered, the horses came to a walk, and proceeded along in single file.

It was at this moment that the girl, unperceived, dropped her handkerchief, which she had managed to get out of her pocket.

She was quite sure that some one would come in search of her, and she wanted to help them all that was in her power.

For the space of probably two minutes the horsemen rode along slowly in single file, and then they came to a halt.

The leader gave a low whistle, and then a man suddenly appeared, coming, it seemed, from the very ground itself.

"Is everything all right?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the man. "Come on in. What have you got, cap, a gal?"

"Never mind. What I have concerns no one but myself."

"Oh! 'Scuse me, cap," and the fellow stepped aside and allowed the horsemen to file through a very narrow passage, which really was nothing more than a natural tunnel.

Through this for a distance of about twenty yards they went, and then they emerged into a spacious cave, which was lighted by a swinging lamp.

The men dismounted here, and leaving his horse in charge of the fellow who had met them at the entrance, the leader bore Reckless Net through a narrow doorway into another and better lighted cave.

"Now, my pretty one, wake up!" exclaimed the captain, as he deposited his burden on a pile of skins in an alcove. "I have reason to believe that you have been playing 'possum. From what I know of you, you are not the kind of a girl to faint away so easily."

"You scoundrel!" cried Net. "What do you mean by carrying me off like this? I demand to be released instantly."

"Ha! ha! ha!" was the laughing rejoinder. "I like your spirit very much, Miss Newport. You are just the sort of bride for an outlaw captain. You should be proud to know that Handsome Jim, the dashing outlaw chief and gambler has thought well enough of you to choose you for his bride."

With these words the villain removed the mask that covered his face.

"You scoundrel!" cried Net, as she recognized the man who had told her he was going to kiss her the first time he caught her alone. "I was quite sure that you were no good the moment I first set eyes upon you. Oh, won't you suffer for this when the miners in Deadwood catch you."

Again the outlaw captain laughed.

"When they catch me," he said. "That is well put. Why, don't you suppose that I know well enough not to let them catch me? I am going right back to Deadwood to-night, and it may be that I will be one to go in search of you after the report gets around that you have mysteriously disappeared. Catch me, eh? Well, I guess there is nothing smart enough in Deadwood to outwit me, or catch me napping. I am Handsome Jim, the captain of the outlaws of Crooked Canyon. I never work myself, but stand ready to take the earnings of the poor fools that do work. I take it in poker games and hold-ups; so you see I am a regular king."

"You are a thief and a cutthroat!" was the spirited retort.

"Well, put it that way if you like. I don't care. Anything that comes from your pretty lips sounds good."

The girl made no reply to this. She stood still as a statue for a moment, and then, quick as a flash, she sprang forward

and seized the revolver that was sticking from the holster on the outlaw's belt.

She made an effort to draw it upon him, but he was too quick for her, and grabbed her by the wrist.

"Come here and tie this vixen up," he said to an ugly-looking Indian squaw who stood near, as though waiting for his order.

The woman obeyed, and in spite of her struggles, Reckless Net as soon rendered powerless.

Then she was thrust back behind a curtain of skins, and the squaw sat down to keep guard over her.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FOLLOWING THE GAMBLER.

The Boy Tenderfoot was not long in finding out that it was a good horse he had under him, and being a good rider he had no difficulty in managing the animal to perfection.

His uncle had placed an extra revolver in his hand when he set out, and as they were both loaded, ready for instant use, Ben was ready for almost anything to happen.

He had taken a more than usual interest in Reckless Net, and the thought that she had been carried off by a band of outlaws moved him deeply.

He had not ridden far up the road when he came upon three horsemen.

One was the father of the girl, and the others friends.

Ben quickly told them who he was and what his mission was.

That was sufficient for Lige Newport to welcome him as a true friend.

"There's one thing sure," said the old man, "an' that is that Net ain't nowhere in Deadwood. That makes me think that somethin' has happened to her. She would not go off like this of her own accord, so some one has gobbled her—that's all there is to it."

"And the outlaws who have their quarters in the place called Crooked Canyon must be the ones who have got her, then?" asked our hero.

"I can't think of any one else who would be guilty of such a mean trick," was the reply. "There be lots of bad men in Deadwood, but I don't think any of 'em would bother ther gal; they all seem to have a high respect for her."

"I heard her say a few hours ago that the good-looking gambler who hangs about town insulted her the other day."

"Yes; she told me about that, too. She said she was goin' to fill him with lead if he tried it ag'in, an' she would do it, too, unless he took her unawares. So you know my darter, then?"

"Yes, sir; my uncle, Gil Patterson, gave me an introduction to her."

"Well, then you know putty well what sort of a gal she is. Now, you don't think it would be an easy thing for one feller to capture her an' carry her off, do yer?"

"No; unless, as you say, she was taken unawares."

"Well, he would have to be a good one to do it even then," and Newport showed that he had the utmost confidence in his daughter's prowess.

"Well," and Ben shook his head, to show that he was convinced as to who had done it. "I am satisfied that Handsome Jim, as he calls himself, would be guilty of almost anything. Does anybody know where he hangs out when he is not in Deadwood?"

"No; that seems to be a mystery. He is a very foxy feller is Handsome Jim."

"I have an idea that if some one followed him when he leaves town good results might be obtained."

"But you can't tell when he'll leave town. Sometimes he stays three or four days."

"Well, if he had anything to do with the disappearance of your daughter he will be likely to leave to-night. I feel quite sure of that."

"Mebbe you are right."

"I feel that I am, and, come to think of it, I guess I'll go back and keep a watch on him."

"All right, young feller. We'll go on down to ther canyon an' see if we kin find out anything. It might be that she took a notion to take a long ride somewhere, an' we may meet her comin' back."

The Boy Tenderfoot turned his horse's head in the direc-

tion of the town and galloped off, leaving the three men to go on their way.

It had struck the boy all of a sudden to pursue the course he was now on.

Somehow, he felt sure that Handsome Jim was at the bottom of the disappearance of Reckless Net, and he meant to find out, if it was any way possible.

Ben was not long in reaching the Bull's-Eye Hotel, and he at once dismounted and entered.

It did not take him over a minute to learn that the gambler was not there, and on questioning the man behind the bar he got the information as to where the man would probably be found if he had not already left town.

The place was not far distant, so Ben walked to it, leaving his horse standing in front of the Bull's-Eye.

When he was within a dozen yards of the shanty, which was another of the gambling resorts, who should he see coming out but Handsome Jim.

The rascal's horse was there waiting for him, and mounting he rode off on a trot.

Our hero lost no time in getting back to his steed.

Swinging into the saddle, he started after his man, who was making for the outskirts of the town.

Ben was now thoroughly satisfied that he was on the right track, and he meant to use all the caution he could bring to his command in following the gambler.

He did not want him to become aware of the fact that he was being followed.

As soon as Handsome Jim was on the road that led to Crooked Canyon he started his horse on a canter, and rode as though he was in somewhat of a hurry.

Ben managed to keep far enough behind him so as to not be observed.

On the two rode without meeting a soul.

The searching party was not in that part of the country, it seemed.

Handsome Jim rode on at a swinging gallop, showing up very graceful in the saddle, as he was an accomplished horseman.

But it was dark, and it was not an exhibition of riding that the two were engaged in.

Handsome Jim was on his way to his secret quarters in the caves of the canyon, and Ben Bascom was simply following him, because he had not the least doubt in his mind that Reckless Net Newport would be found by his doing so.

Suddenly our hero missed the man ahead of him.

Then he thought he had ought to have kept closer to him.

He reined in his horse as quick as a flash and listened.

He heard the faint sounds of hoofbeats off to the right.

"He has turned in that direction," muttered the boy. "Well, I must follow him, at all hazards."

At the first chance to leave the road Ben turned and followed the sounds.

He knew he was right, for he had struck a sort of trail.

But he could no longer see the man he was following.

The trail was a winding one, and there were so many rocks jutting out this way and that, and the darkness was so intense that it was hard to distinguish an object over fifty feet off.

That he had now entered the canyon Ben was quite sure.

He could tell that by the appearance of his surroundings.

Revolver in hand, the boy rode along, now on a canter and then on a walk, because the roughness of the ground would not permit him to go any faster.

At the end of ten minutes he could not hear the sounds of hoofbeats any longer.

The gambler had eluded him.

It was dark as a pocket, and Ben came to a halt.

Suddenly he heard a noise near him, and the next moment a ray of light from a lantern was turned directly upon him.

Crack! His revolver spoke immediately, and the light went out!

It was as good a shot as he had ever made, and he knew it had to be done, for in that brief instant he had seen a masked man standing directly in front of him!

## CHAPTER IX.

### BEN IN HARD LUCK.

Strange as it may seem, no shot was fired in answer to the one Ben sent crashing through the lantern.

The brave boy sat there in the saddle, expecting every

second to feel the sting of a bullet and hear the spiteful crack of a revolver.

But nothing of the sort happened.

It flashed through Ben's mind that evidently there was only one man near him, and that the fellow had discreetly got behind the cover of a boulder.

It was anything but a pleasant situation to be in. To one acquainted with that section of the country it would have been bad enough, but here was a young fellow fresh from the East in a wild and lonesome canyon, sitting on the back of a horse with a masked outlaw right close to him.

And to make the situation more appalling, it was pitch-dark!

Ben was not long in making up his mind what to do.

He knew if he attempted to ride away the man would be very apt to let go with his weapon, judging where to shoot by the sound.

So the boy slipped noiselessly from the saddle to the ground.

Luck was with him, it appeared, for his hand came in contact with the gnarled trunk of a tree almost the instant he got upon the ground.

He placed the bridle-rein over a broken limb, so the horse could not stray off, and then, revolver in hand, he began crawling from the spot.

He had no intention of going very far; he simply wanted to get in a position where he would have a chance with the man he knew was not over ten yards away.

The Boy Tenderfoot kept on feeling his way along, moving silently in a circle.

He had an idea that the man who had flashed the lantern on him was Handsome Jim.

And if that was the case, he wanted to meet him.

Suddenly the boy heard a slight sound near him.

It was only the moving of a pebble, but that was sufficient to make him do a risky thing.

Gathering his muscles, he made a sudden leap forward, striking out with his fist as he did so.

He had made no miscalculation.

His clenched fist struck a man full in the breast, and down he went to the ground, with the boy on top of him.

Ben had the muzzle of his revolver placed against the man's head almost before they struck the ground.

"A single move out of you, my friend, and off goes the top of your head!" Ben ventured to whisper with his mouth close to the fellow's ear.

There was no reply, but Ben knew that it was all right.

It was not likely that there would be any move made just then.

But it was not going to run our hero's way very long.

Suddenly he heard a whisper from a point a little to the left.

"What is the matter, Bill?" came the words to his ears. "What was that noise I heard just now?"

But Bill did not answer; he felt the muzzle of the revolver press a little harder against his temple, and he knew it was not wise for him to do so.

"Did you fall, Bill?" asked the voice, a little louder this time. "I have got the boy's horse, but he has taken a sneak on foot."

Ben began to grow a trifle uneasy.

The situation was now truly what might be called desperate.

Unconsciously he removed his revolver from the head of the fellow he was holding down.

There was a sudden wrench, and up went the man's knees, throwing Ben from him.

"Grab him, Cap!" cried the man, in a loud voice. "Look out, now!"

The Boy Tenderfoot had had the breath knocked out of him, and before he could recover he was seized from behind and the revolver knocked from his hand.

In much less time than it takes to write it, a rope was wound about his body, pinioning his arms to his sides.

"Now I guess we know who is on top," said the man Ben had been holding down. "Cap, it has turned out all right, after all. My! but it is a lucky thing that you found he was following you."

"It is lucky," answered the voice of Handsome Jim. "He is pretty cute for a tenderfoot, but not cute enough for us. Now, just yank him into the cave; he is altogether too smart to live, and he has got to die! Just think of it! This boy is the only one who could get as close as this to our hang-out."

Poor Ben! For the first time he began to realize that he

had made a slight mistake about Western life. He knew that he had been a little too hasty in following the gambler all alone.

Now his life was in jeopardy.

But he did not give up, and when the masked villains ordered him to his feet, he obeyed.

"What did you follow me for, anyway?" asked Handsome Jim, with a tinge of anger in his voice.

"I followed you so I could find the girl you captured this afternoon," was the bold reply.

"You did, eh? Well, please understand that you have followed me to a place where you will never leave alive, then. How does that strike you, Mr. Boy Tenderfoot?"

"Oh, perhaps it won't be quite as bad as that. My uncle and some of the men in town know that I started to follow you. If I fail to come back in a reasonable time they will hold you responsible; then, I guess, you won't feel so jolly about it."

The gambler laughed at this, but it was quite evident that the boy's words had a certain effect on him, just the same.

"Fetch him along, Bill. This is no place to banter words," he said, and then our hero was forced along to the mouth of the passage that Reckless Net had been carried through that very day.

Ben could not see a thing, it was so dark, and he had not the slightest idea in which direction they were taking him.

He knew there was no use in his making a struggle; his hands were bound tightly to his sides, and that settled it, as far as his doing anything was concerned.

Into the first cave, where the outlaws kept their horses, he was conducted, and then into the main cave where the band lived so secretly.

It was light in here, and the boy could see his surroundings. There were a score or more of men in the place, some of whom were sitting idly about playing cards, and others were walking up and down, as though exercising themselves.

There was a huge iron ring in a solid wall of rock, and to this our hero was led.

Then an iron band was placed about his waist and attached to the ring with a chain.

"Now I guess you will be safe enough," remarked Handsome Jim. "Enjoy yourself!"

## CHAPTER X.

### IN THE CANYON.

As the hours wore on Gil Patterson began to worry considerably because his nephew did not show up.

The first thing the miner did on reaching his cabin was to lie down and sleep off the effects of the whisky he had imbibed.

It was about three in the morning when he awoke, and then it was that he began to think of Ben Bascom.

There was the bed he had arranged for the boy, but it was just as he had made it.

"He's got into trouble, I'll bet!" muttered Patterson, as he rubbed his eyes and straightened himself up. "I must find out."

He promptly got himself ready and left the shanty, leaving the door unlocked, so if Ben did return he could get in.

The public places were still open and in full blast. Though a number of the miners had gone in search of the missing girl had not yet returned, they were not missed.

When Patterson learned that the party of searchers had not returned he began to feel a little easier about his nephew.

It must be that he was with them, he thought, and that being the case, he would be likely to return with them.

Patterson remained up all night.

It was not long after daylight when all the men who had gone came back with no tidings of the lost girl.

But Ben Bascom did not come, and all the tidings the miner got of him was that Lige Newport, the father of Reckless Net, said he had met him, and that the boy had started back to Deadwood to see if Handsome Jim, the gambler, was still there.

This was soon after the boy had started out on his quest, so that caused the old man to hunt around for more information.

But he did not strike any one who had seen Ben, and when he learned that the good-looking gambler was sitting in a

poker game in one of the public places, and had been since long before midnight, he was puzzled.

"Where in thunder kin ther boy be?" he asked himself. "Can it be possible that he has galloped away on ther horse an' run over the edge of some precipice? I hadn't oughter let him go, cause he don't know a thing about these diggin's."

The miner soon got another horse and started for the Newport shanty.

Lige had gone over half an hour before in a very unsettled state of mind.

The disappearance of the girl was puzzling in the extreme.

Not a single trace had been found of her, and the old man was racking his brain trying to think of something that might be the means of gleaning some tidings of her, when Gil Patterson rode up to the door and dismounted.

"Any news?" asked Patterson.

"Nope," was the reply. "We can't find a trace of Net, an' her mother is putty nigh crazy."

"It are too bad, Lige, an' I sympathize with yer. That gang of outlaws in Crooked Canyon have certainly got her, accordin' to my reckonin', an' I begin to think that they have got my nephew, too."

"Why, ain't he showed up?" questioned Newport.

"No; I can't find neither hide nor hair of him."

"Well, I seed him last night. He was huntin' for Net, too. He seemed to think that Handsome Jim knew somethin' about it, an' he rode back to town to hunt him up an' keep a watch on him."

"Well, Handsome Jim is in town yet, an' has been all night, an' ther Boy Tenderfoot ain't—so where in thunder is he?"

"I give it up, Gil."

"What do you say if we take a ride over to Crooked Canyon, anyway? We might find some signs of the gal; she might have dropped something if she did go that way."

"We've been pretty well through ther place, but I don't know as it would do any hurt to go ag'in. It's broad daylight now, too, an' that may make a difference."

"Sartin it will. We must keep our eyes open, for if we kin only locate ther place where that masked gang hangs out I'm satisfied that we'll find your gal."

There was such an air of confidence in the miner's words that Lige Newport's hopes went up as if by magic.

He hastened into the house and cheered his sorrow-stricken wife as much as he could, and then got his horse out.

It was not long before he was ready, and then the two men mounted and started off.

Both were armed with a brace of revolvers apiece, and both knew how to use them, if it became necessary.

The commencement of the canyon was soon reached.

There was nothing that seemed like a regular trail that ran through it, but our two friends chose the best way open to them, and rode slowly for the narrow defile ahead.

They had just reached that portion of the place where it was very dark, owing to the thickness of the foliage overhead, and had come to a halt to decide upon what should be the next move, when they heard the sounds of approaching hoofs.

Whoever it was coming, he was riding at a sharp canter, and this fact made our friends think that he must be well acquainted in that section.

"Let's git back here a little and hide," suggested Patterson.

"That's right," nodded Newport.

It was no sooner said than done. There was ample room to hide, so they would not be apt to be observed by the horseman.

But they were not a moment too soon in getting behind a jutting shoulder of rock.

The horseman came on and passed within a few feet of them, and as he did so the two men gave a simultaneous start and looked hard at each other.

The horseman was no other than Handsome Jim, the gambler!

They waited until the hoof-beats had almost died out in the distance, and then Gil Patterson got off his horse.

"I'm goin' to follow that feller on foot," he said. "I don't believe he is goin' very far up ther canyon. Besides, ther trail kin be seen better by walkin'."

"That's right," was the reply. "I'm with you, Gil. I begin to believe that ther boy was right when he said last night that he thought ther cuss knew somethin' about ther disappearance of Net."

It was but the work of a moment for them to tie their

steeds, and then they started in the direction taken by Handsome Jim.

As the miner had said, the trail could be followed pretty easy, and with their revolvers ready for instant use, they walked along in the gloom of the canyon.

When they had walked along for perhaps five minutes they became aware of the fact that there was another horseman coming behind them.

"Lay low till he passes," whispered Patterson, and they accordingly drew back in the shadows.

The next minute the horseman appeared.

He was no other than the red-haired man Dangerous Dan had been having fun with when Ben Bascom interfered, but as neither of our friends had seen him before, they did not know him from a side of sole-leather.

He had not gone over twenty feet past the two men in hiding when he reined in his horse and dismounted.

"I guess I hadn't better go any further on horseback," they heard him mutter, as he led the animal almost directly to where they were. "That gambler feller might find out that I am following him. I wonder how far he is goin', anyhow? An' what business is he on in this wild place?"

"Hello, stranger!" exclaimed Patterson, in a low voice, as he stepped into view. "You seem to be on ther same errand as we are."

## CHAPTER XI.

### BEN AND TOM BOWLER.

The Boy Tenderfoot was in anything but an easy frame of mind when he found himself chained to the ring in the solid rock.

Perhaps his great streak of good luck after arriving in Deadwood had been the means of making him think he was almost invincible, but be it as it may, he was certainly very much dejected when he saw Handsome Jim leave the cave, after giving some instructions to the man he left in charge.

But though he was dejected, Ben was not discouraged; neither was he ready to give up.

He was one of the sort who hardly know what fear is, and when he began to run the thing over in his mind he became a trifle more at ease.

The score or more of outlaws present paid little or no attention to him; they seemed to be engrossed with their various occupations. Some played cards, and some dozed idly, and others walked around the cave, evidently for the small amount of exercise there was attached to it.

When Handsome Jim had gone about half an hour, and Ben was quite himself, he spoke to one of the men as he walked slowly by smoking a black-looking pipe.

"How long am I to be kept here, do you suppose?" he asked.

"That is more than I kin say, youngster," was the reply. "Ther captain didn't tell any of us. I reckon, though, that you'll never git away from here alive, unless you should take it in your head to join our gang."

"I hardly think I would do that. Say! you seem to be a pretty good sort of a fellow; tell me if there is a girl held a prisoner here, won't you?"

"Well, I don't know as it will be any harm for me to say yes."

"Well, that's what brought me to this neighborhood. I came to look for that girl."

"An' that's what ther captain gobbled you up an' brought you here for, is it?"

"Well, I guess he had a kind of a grudge against me, too. You see, I knocked him down in one of the gambling places in Deadwood a couple of hours ago."

"You did!" and the man gave a low whistle of surprise.

"Yes. He said some things to me that I didn't like, and I let him have a good one, and down he went on the floor."

"Well, if you have done that I can't see how it is that you are alive. It's a wonder he didn't let daylight through you for hittin' him."

"Oh, he couldn't do that very well, you know. I had the drop on him."

"Where do you hail from, anyway?" questioned the man, after a pause, during which he was very busy sizing our hero up.

"From New York. I just arrived in Deadwood this afternoon," replied Ben, who was perfectly at ease, since he found some one who would talk to him.

"From New York, hey? Well, I thought you didn't belong around these diggin's. Them store clothes you've got on ain't worn here very much."

"I haven't had time to rig myself out in Western costume. I'll be fixed up all right by the time I have been here a week."

"I don't know about that. It kinder strikes me that you won't ever need any other clothes."

"See here, now," and Ben lowered his voice. "What's your name, my friend?"

"Tom Bowler," was the reply. "I was born in New York myself, but it has been years since I have been there. I got in a bank robbery scrape an' come out here. I didn't have much luck till I struck Handsome Jim a couple of months ago. Now things are what I call elegant."

"You would have had a great deal better luck in the end if you had stuck to leading an honest life after coming out here. Tom Bowler. There may be a time when you will want to go back to New York, just to see what the place looks like, and when that time comes there will certainly be a price on your head, and you could never get there without being nabbed by a detective. It isn't too late to reform, Tom Bowler. What do you think about it? Am I right or am I wrong in what I say?"

Tom Bowler, as he called himself, scratched his head uneasily, and then drawing up a bench that was close at hand sat down close to the boy prisoner.

"Say," he said, in a husky voice, "you are ther first person I've heard talk that way in years. I feel like shakin' hands with a New Yorker, but I don't suppose you'd want to do it with a man of my kind."

"Shake hands with you? Why, certainly I would," and Ben put out his hand and grasped the horny fist of the outlaw in a hearty manner.

His hands and feet had been untied the moment the iron band was clamped around his waist, so he could use them both as far as the length of the chain would permit him to.

That portion of the cave was rather dimly lighted now, and the outlaws did not appear to be paying any attention to the captive or the man talking to him.

The boy tenderfoot realized that he had made a friend in the man, and he meant to profit by it.

If he could only induce him to set him free!

The thought fairly sent Ben's blood coursing madly through his veins!

"Tom Bowler," he said, in a low, persuasive tone, "we are both born New Yorkers, and we both want to go back there some day. There is no reason why you shouldn't go back there and be welcomed by the friends who have given you up for dead. Now is the time to reform! Give up the life of an outlaw and help me get my liberty. If you do, I will stick by you as long as I live, and I will see to it that you are given a show to improve your chances by living an honest life."

The outlaw shook his head and remained silent for a moment.

Finally he raised himself from his seat and said:

"Boy, if I was to do what you want me to, I would never leave Deadwood, for Handsome Jim would have me filled with lead before I was twenty-four hours older."

"But suppose he did not know that you set me at liberty?" went on Ben, who was not ready to give it up yet. "Suppose you rigged it so I could get this iron band from my waist and get away—you could stay around here for a while, or till I got things ready for you to leave. Come, now. You can do that much. You are an old New Yorker, and you——"

"I'll think it over, my boy," interrupted Tom Bowler. "You have struck me in a tender spot, and I don't know what to do. I'll think it over."

With these words he walked away and began pacing back and forth in another portion of the cave.

Not knowing what else to do, Ben began examining the band that was about his waist.

It was locked with a small padlock, and he found that it could not be removed without a key, unless it was broken.

He could not slip it below his hips, though he could come pretty near doing it.

Suddenly it occurred to him that he had a key in his pocket. It was nothing but a trunk key, to be sure, but it was just about the size to fit the lock on the iron band.

Ben soon had the key out and, making sure that no one was watching him, he fitted it in the lock and gave it a turn.

Then it was that he felt like giving a cry of delight.

The lock was opened.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ESCAPED.

Ben Bascom now felt that he had an even chance for his life. It was quite likely that the captain of the outlaw band really

intended to kill him, else why would he bring him to the secret headquarters?

But now he was free, as far as the use of his hands and feet were concerned, and that meant a whole lot.

The next thing was to get out of the place!

But the boy did not want to get out of the cave alone; he wanted to take Reckless Net Newport with him.

He was certain she was there, for the outlaw he had been conversing with admitted as much.

Ben sat on the hard floor to think the matter over.

The first thing he did was to take the lock from the hasp of the iron band.

Then he took his time about getting the band from his waist.

It was at length accomplished, and the plucky boy was satisfied that none of the men in the cave—not even Tom Bowler—were aware that he was doing anything more than a helpless prisoner could do.

As the night wore on the men gradually sought their skin couches, which were arranged on either side of the cave and went to sleep.

Only one man was pacing up and down now. He was there for the purpose of waking the rest at the first warning sound from the man who guarded the entrance to the huge double cave.

Sometimes he came real close to our hero, and on these occasions Ben was afraid that he might take a notion to see if everything was all right with the iron band and chain.

But he did not.

The more the boy tenderfoot studied over the situation, the more puzzled he became as to what to do.

If he were to spring upon the guard as he went past, it would only be one chance out of a hundred that he could strike him senseless before he uttered a cry.

And one single cry would alarm the whole cave.

Another thing that bothered him was that he could not seem to satisfy himself that Reckless Net was really there.

He took note of the fact that one corner of the cave was partitioned off by hanging skins, but he had neither seen nor heard anything that would indicate that the girl was behind that partition.

The curtain of skins was about twenty feet distant from the spot where he had been chained to the rocky wall.

Ben was determined to find out if Net was there or not.

He had a copy of a newspaper in his coat pocket, which the outlaws had not thought worth while to remove from him. It was a New York paper, too, and acting on a sudden impulse, he began to twist it up in as small a piece as he could.

When he had got it just to his liking he watched his chance and sent it flying for the skin curtains.

His aim was true, for it went over the top and landed on the other side.

Almost instantly there was a sound he had not heard before in that portion of the cave.

It was a faint sound, too, but the boy knew it was an exclamation of surprise.

And, what was more, it was the voice of a female.

The guard, who was coming that way just then, heard it, too, but he merely glanced at the skin curtain and went on his way.

Ben kept his eyes on the curtain.

He had not looked that way more than thirty seconds when two skins parted, and a face appeared.

It was the face of Reckless Net Newport! He had been impressed deeply at the first sight of her, and he could make no mistake about it now.

The girl peered around in an expectant manner, and finally her eyes rested on the boy prisoner.

As dim as the light was, she recognized him!

She gave a nod of recognition, which he returned promptly, and then her face disappeared from view.

The boy tenderfoot now began to grow desperate.

The girl was in the cave, and he felt that he must save her from the villain, Handsome Jim.

Just as he had made up his mind to try and crawl over to her quarters, he heard the guard rousing one of the men.

This caused him to remain perfectly quiet again.

But he kept a sharp watch, and soon saw that the guard was going to turn in and another man take his place.

But what was his surprise when he saw that the new man to go on watch was Tom Bowler, the fellow he had talked to that night!

Once more his hopes jumped away up.

Bowler immediately started in on his weary walk back and forth through the cave, and the other man sought his couch

and was soon snoring away as though his very life depended on it.

Again Ben saw the face appear between the hanging skins, and he nodded for the girl to bide her time.

Pretty soon Tom Bowler came along very close to him, and Ben whispered:

"Don't you notice anything I do, Tom Bowler, and I will meet you in Deadwood to-morrow night."

The outlaw gave a start.

"Can you work it yourself?" he asked in a low whisper.

"Yes; and I am going to take the girl with me."

"You don't mean it!"

"But I do, though."

"Well, if you make a success of it, I suppose I'll get the blame of it."

"No, you won't, not any more than the man you just relieved. You can even help me by going out to talk with the outside guard when I get ready to go out."

Bowler shook his head in a manner that was positive.

"You could never get out that way," he said. "If you go, you will have to take the Death Passage."

"Where is it? Where does it lead to?"

"It starts from the stable and runs along for nearly a mile and comes out in a place called Graveyard Gulch. If you go through it you must look out for ghosts."

"Well, Tom, I'm not afraid of ghosts. If you say that is the only way I can get out of here I'll go that way and run all risks."

"That's ther only way. You couldn't possibly git past ther outside guard, an' if you did you'd be liable to tumble over a precipice afore you had gone ten feet. If you kin git loose from that chain I'll try and fix it so you an' ther gal kin git in ther Death Passage. Then I'll meet you as soon as I kin to-morrow in Graveyard Gulch an' git you out. But I won't come through the Death Passage, though. If I did, I couldn't get you out. Now, if you have got loose from that chain, go ahead. I'll stick to you now, even if I git shot for it. I'm done with this kind of life just as soon as I kin git clear of the gang I'm with. Let me know when you are ready."

Bowler walked on, and without any further ado, Ben started to creep for the curtain of skins.

He got there in pretty quick time and, pulling the skins aside, exclaimed in a whisper:

"Hello, Miss Newport! Are you ready to leave the place?"

"You bet I am, Mister Boy Tenderfoot!" came the quick reply. "My! but you could not have happened along in a better time. Here I have been waiting for a chance to get out of here for over an hour, but could not see my way clear. I fixed the old squaw who was left to guard me, all right. There she is over there in the corner, bound and gagged. She didn't know I was so handy at biting knots loose, and she went to sleep, like the old fool that she is! I've got a couple of shooters, too."

"Good! I am without one. Now, if you are ready to leave I have things all fixed. I have got one of the outlaws to help us."

"Is that so? It is much more than I expected of any of 'em. Well, I am ready now."

"Wait right here, then, till I say the word," and taking one of the revolvers from the girl, our hero crept a little ways from the curtain and motioned to Tom Bowler.

The outlaw seemed to be not a little worried as he slowly came over.

He had a bundle of clothing on his arm, and handing it to Ben, said:

"You had better take this over to where you were chained an' fix it up so it will look like you. That may help me out of it considerably."

Ben saw the point, and he promptly did as the man suggested.

In less than five minutes he had arranged the bundle of clothing so it looked as though some one was lying on the floor of the cave with the iron band about the waist.

When he got back to where Bowler was, the man said:

"It is all right. I have rolled ther stuff away from ther mouth of Death Passage. Ther other guard is outside, so as soon as I walk up to ther other end of ther cave you an' ther gal sneak out. I'll put ther rubbish back over ther entrance as soon as I git a chance, an' then they'll never think you went that way. I don't know how either you or the gal got loose, an' that's two things I kin tell as ther truth when I'm asked. Keep up your nerve now, an' I'll come to ther gulch an' git you out some time to-morrer. That's the best I kin do."

"Thank you, Tom Bowler!" exclaimed Ben, shaking the man's hand. "You will never regret this act, I am sure."

"No, I never will—I know that, too. I won't regret it, even if I have to die for it. If you an' me kin only meet in old New York some day I'll be the happiest man alive."

That was all. Bowler walked away, and the next instant two forms were stealing out of the cave into the stable.

They were the boy tenderfoot and Reckless Net.

It did not take Ben more than a second to locate the entrance to the passage, as dim as the light was.

It was not a very large opening, so they had to crawl into it.

The pretty Western girl did not hesitate a particle, and both went in without making the least bit of noise.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE CAW OF A CROW.

Bill Whistler, the red-haired man, did not seem to be the least bit surprised when he was hailed by Gil Patterson in the dark mazes of Crooked Canyon.

"I'm glad to meet you, gents," he retorted, and then he shook hands with both Patterson and old man Newport.

"I said I reckoned you must be here on ther same errand as we was," observed Patterson.

"Well, maybe I am and maybe I ain't," was the rather evasive reply.

"We are lookin' for my darter Net, who has been missin' since afore dark last night," ventured Newport.

"An' my nephew, who is called ther boy tenderfoot; he is missin', also," added Ben's uncle.

"You mean ther boy what came in on ther stage with me yisterday, I guess?"

"Yes; he only got here yesterday."

"Well, he done me an awful good turn by turnin' ther tables on ther feller what was makin' me dance by shootin' bullets at my feet, an' I reckon if I kin help you people out any I'll only be too glad to do it."

"Lemme see! I think Ben said your name was Bill Whistler, if I ain't mistaken," said Patterson.

"Yep! That are my name. I don't know much about this part of ther country, but I had to come out here on a little business, an' so I have got to make ther best of it. But, say! I want to help you find my friend, ther boy tenderfoot, an' the poor gal what has been stole by ther outlaws."

"So you think the outlaws had a hand in it, too, then?" asked Newport.

"Certain sure! I heard 'em say up in Deadwood that there was a gang what hung out around somewhere in these parts, and I thought I'd come out an' have a look to satisfy myself. Did you see that fancy lookin' gambler as he went past a leetle while ago? Wel, I ain't got a great deal of use for that feller. I rather think he is a bad egg."

"That are my opinion, since I found that my nephew had his suspicions of him, an' started to foller him last night."

"Started to foller him, hey?"

"Yes; an' that's what puzzles me, 'cause Handsome Jim didn't leave town till this morning."

"Oh, yes, he did. He left last night an' come back again."

"Do you know that to be a fact?" asked Gil Patterson.

"Certainly, I do. I'm a leetle bit interested in ther feller myself, an' I've kept a good eye on him since I've ben out in these parts."

"Well, there is only one thing, then," spoke up Lige Newport. "If Handsome Jim left town last night, an' then come back, ther Boy Tenderfoot, as he is called, left town right on his track an' didn't come back."

"That's right, as sure as you are a livin' sinner!" exclaimed Patterson, with a solemn shake of his head.

"Well, you ain't run across ther boy's body, have you?"

"No."

"Well, then, don't think he is dead till you do. For my part, I think he is altogether too cute to allow such a chap as that fancy looking gambler to git away with him. He may have found out about where the missing gal is, an' is laying low, waitin' for a chance to get her out of ther clutches of ther gang what's got her."

"That are a very sensible conclusion to arrive at," and Patterson shook his head. "Bill Whistler, you have got a good head on yer, even if it is covered with red hair. A red-headed man are better than a bald-headed man any time, in my opinion."

"Tain't ther color of ther hair what counts; it's what's under ther hair," spoke up Lige, who was bald-headed himself.

"Oh!" exclaimed Gil. "I wasn't casting no reflections on you, Newport."

"Well, never mind if you was. Come! Let's go an' see if we can find anything of ther gal or ther boy."

"You must excuse me, but I'm goin' on this trip alone," said Whistler.

"Oh, all right, then."

"I'll tell you one thing, though. If you happen to hear the caw of a crow and don't see any crow, you'll know I am pretty close by and in trouble."

"We'll remember that," retorted Patterson.

Whistler now walked off and was soon lost to sight around a bend in the rock.

The two men remained standing there for a while, and then, at the suggestion of Newport, they started in the direction the eccentric man with the red hair had taken.

They had not proceeded very far when suddenly they heard the cawing of a crow.

### CHAPTER XIV.

#### GRAVEYARD GULCH.

Ben Bascom had no sooner got into the dark passage when he found that it was really a grewsome place.

It was called Death Passage, and no wonder! It had all the appearances of a grave.

"It is awful dark in here," whispered Net Newport. "But I ain't afraid; anything is better than being left in that cave with the outlaws. Handsome Jim had the audacity to tell me that he was going to bring a minister back with him."

"A minister!" echoed Ben, forgetting all about the uncanny surroundings. "Why, what for?"

"He said I had to marry him."

"He did, eh? Well, you told him you wouldn't do it, didn't you?"

"You bet I did! Do you know what I was going to do after I got the best of the old squaw and got hold of the two shooters?"

"Shoot him, I suppose, if he tried to force you to marry him."

"That's right! I was goin' to button-hole him and let daylight through the minister, too, if he had been willing to go on with the ceremony when I wasn't."

"You would have done just right."

"I think so. Well, I would have done it, even if I died the next minute for doing it."

The girl spoke in a way that showed she meant just what she said.

While they were talking they had been moving along through the passage.

It was so low that they were forced to stoop, and in many places their shoulders touched on either side.

But when they had covered a distance of about a hundred yards it gradually began to grow larger, and soon they could walk along with comparative freedom.

A damp, musty smell pervaded the place, showing that it had not been opened in some time.

"If we only had a light," said our hero.

"We can! I never thought of it before. I have a box of matches in the pocket of my dress that I bought for mother at the supply store," answered Net.

She quickly produced the box and handed it to Ben.

"It is a wonder the old squaw didn't take the matches from me," she observed.

"When you got the best of her you saved me a lot of trouble, for in overpowering her I might have aroused the sleeping outlaws."

Ben lit a match and held it up so they could see how it really looked in the passage.

It was very irregular in width, height and the way it ran.

The match soon died out, and then once more they were in darkness.

"If we only had some kind of a torch," said Ben.

"Can't we make one?"

"What can we make it with?"

"I think my buckskin leggings would burn. I soaked them with oil only the day before yesterday when it rained so hard."

"Well, if you say so, we might try one of them. I am quite sure that I have nothing that would burn with a flame that would last any length of time."

Net soon had one of the leggings twisted up, and then, before her companion was aware of it, she applied a match to it. It burned, but not with the glow she thought it would.

However, it was a great deal better than no light at all, and it gave promise of lasting.

Much encouraged, the two now proceeded on through the passage.

The improvised torch, poor as the light was, proved to be greatly to their advantage.

The passage was of such irregular formation that nothing short of feeling carefully their way would have got them through.

Ever and anon they were forced to clamber over a boulder which had rolled across the way, probably during some upheaval of the earth in times past and gone.

For ten minutes the two forced their way along, and then they paused to rest for a while.

"It can't be possible that Tom Bowler made a mistake when he said there was an outlet to this passage," remarked the Boy Tenderfoot in a tone that showed he was not as confident as he was at the start.

"If he told you there was an outlet to it, he most likely spoke the truth, otherwise he would not have assisted you at all. I am of the opinion that he spoke the truth."

When the girl said this Ben nodded.

"Well, we will keep right on going, then," he exclaimed. "We must come out pretty soon."

For another ten minutes they kept on, and then just as Ben was going to suggest a halt, they found the cool, fresh air blowing in their faces.

They had reached the outlet.

"This must be Graveyard Gulch," observed our hero, as he took Reckless Net gently by the arm and conducted her out into a defile and looked up at the stars above his head.

"I suppose so, though I never heard of such a place being around here," was the reply.

"Well, there is no use in trying to go any further till daylight. Tom Bowler said there was no way to get out of here, unless we went by the way we came. We might as well make the best of it right here for the balance of the night. I will hunt around for some wood to make a fire."

Net nodded, and then both started in quest of dry fagots.

They had little difficulty in finding all they wanted, and then Ben struck a match and quickly kindled a fire.

In the quest for wood he had found a small mountain fir, which had probably lost its rooting in some gale and tumbled into the gulch and, placing this beneath a shelving piece of rock close to the fire, he bade Net to sit down.

"Thank you," she said. "I must say that you are the first one I ever allowed to wait on me. I usually attend to my own wants, you know."

"Oh, well," retorted Ben, "there are bound to be exceptions. I assure you, Miss Newport, that it is a pleasure for me to do all I can for your convenience."

"Very well, then. I will sit right here till you tell me to get up."

"And I will see to it that the fire is kept burning, and also keep a watch on the mouth of the passage. It may be that Handsome Jim, as they call him, will come back and learn that we went through here, and if he does it is more than likely that he will come after us by the same way."

"If he does his bones will find a resting-place in Graveyard Gulch," was the calm rejoinder. "I will drop him the moment he shows up."

"If you are not asleep."

"Don't think I will go to sleep. I couldn't if I wanted to ever so much. This is altogether too much of a strange place to fall asleep in."

An hour passed by, during which time Ben kept a sharp watch on the mouth of the passage.

Not a sound came from it, which showed that the outlaws had not started to hunt them up in that direction, anyhow.

The boy and girl kept up a running conversation all the while, and they soon knew the history of each other.

In spite of her remark that she could not go to sleep in that strange place, Reckless Net dropped off into a slumber about an hour before dawn.

Ben stuck it out, though, as tired as he was from his long journey and subsequent happenings.

At the first signs of daylight he was up and stirring.

But he did not wake his fair companion. She was sleeping soundly in the snug little nook he had provided for her, and he made up his mind to let her sleep.

The boy began to look around to find out what sort of a place he was in, and as it grew lighter he could see that it was certainly a wild, weird spot.

He did not care to go out of sight of the sleeping girl, so he

walked off at right angles and kept looking upward, as he thought Tom Bowler might be somewhere around already.

When he was about a dozen yards from the smouldering fire he chanced to look upon the ground, and then he gave a violent start and took an involuntary step backward.

And no wonder, for before him lay the skeletons of a man and a horse!

Graveyard Gulch was truly a fitting name for the place!

## CHAPTER XV.

### HANDSOME JIM IS WORRIED.

When Handsome Jim reached his secret cave he was pretty well tired out.

He had had but little sleep the night before, and now to lose the whole of the one that had just passed was about all he could stand.

He had won about two thousand dollars during the night, and this fact, together with his great success in kidnapping Reckless Net, made him feel very much elated.

"I will take a look at the girl and tantalize the boy a little, and then turn in for a few hours' sleep," he muttered. "After that I will dispose of the boy in some way, and then I will rig up one of the men as a minister and get married. Ha, ha, ha! Won't it be a joke on the girl? But she will soon get over it and learn to love me in true womanly fashion. There is not the least doubt about that. And I—well, I shall love her all the more for it, I am sure I will."

As the outlaw chief rid himself of these thoughts he dismounted near the secret entrance to the underground headquarters and gave the proper signal to the guard to apprise him of his coming.

This was done by whistling three times quickly, and then one long, low whistle.

It was promptly answered by the guard, so the captain of the villainous band at once stepped forward, leading his horse.

The guard was outside, and seeing who it was, he quickly saluted, and Handsome Jim passed in, very tired, as has been said.

A call from him brought out a man to take care of his horse, and then he stepped into the main cave.

Tom Bowler had been relieved at seven o'clock, so another man was now on guard.

"How's things?" asked the captain, as he halted before the man for a moment.

"First rate, Cap," was the reply. "I ain't heard a whimper out of ther gal, an' ther boy has behaved himself wonderfully well, I must say. He's been lyin' there asleep, I guess, 'cause I ain't seen him move since I've been on duty."

"Well, I'll make him move before this time to-morrow; perhaps it will be his last move, too!" and the outlaw captain laughed as though he considered it a very good joke.

Then he turned toward the curtain of skins.

Reaching it, he pulled the skins aside and cried jokingly:

"Come, my pretty one, it's time to get up!"

It was very dark in that particular corner just now, and receiving no reply, Handsome Jim struck a match and peered in.

The first object his eyes rested upon was the old squaw he had left in charge of his fair captive.

She was lying on a pile of skins, bound and gagged, and in an utterly helpless position.

"What in thunder is up?" cried the outlaw, and then he quickly severed the cords from the squaw and tore the gag from her mouth.

She was pretty well worn out from being in that state so long, but she managed to gasp out what had happened.

"What!" cried Handsome Jim. "The girl gone! What do you mean, you copper-faced hag!" and in his anger he felled the squaw to the ground with his fist.

Out into the cave he rushed and made straight for the form of the boy prisoner lying on the floor.

Almost instantly he realized the deception that had been practised, when he found nothing but a bundle of clothes, and with a voice that sounded more like the roar of a bull than anything else, he called the men to their feet.

"Who stood guard during my absence?" he asked, his eyes flashing like those of an angry wildcat.

The man who had been relieved by Tom Bowler stepped up, as did the fellow now on duty.

But Bowler was not to be found.

"I took Bowler's place at seven," said the last named.

"Bowler went out about half an hour ago," said another. "He won't be gone long."

"None of you know anything about how the boy and the girl got away, I suppose?"

This was said in a sneering way as the captain turned on his heel and went out to talk to the guard on the outside.

But he learned nothing there. The man was as much surprised as he himself had been when he learned of the mysterious escape of the captives.

He gave the names of the men who had been on watch before him, and when they were questioned they swore that no one had passed out save those who were entitled to.

"Well, it is a mystery," observed Handsome Jim, who seemed to be not a little alarmed. "If Tom Bowler can clear himself of suspicion when he comes back, it will make it look as though the two had wings and flew away. But they have got away, and we must not forget that! It means that we are in danger of being run down by the people of Deadwood! If that happens, we will have the liveliest time of our lives."

"It would take a regiment to drive us out of here, Cap," replied the guard. "If it comes to their worst we could all crawl into Death Passage till they had gone, and they'd never know where we went. By Jove! I wonder if their boy and gal didn't go through Death Passage?"

"That's so!" exclaimed Handsome Jim. "I never thought of that before. But how could they have found it—that is the question?"

"Mebbe there is a traitor among us, Cap."

"Yes, perhaps there is, but who is it?"

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm sure I don't know," he said. "I couldn't place my finger on one of the men, as far as their loyalty is concerned. It might be that their Boy Tenderfoot was sharp enough to find it himself."

"It might be, but I hardly believe it. It is just possible that he slipped the iron band off, but I can't believe he found the entrance to Death Passage without being told where it was. Let us take a look at things over there."

The outlaw walked to the pile of debris that was heaped up in front of the opening.

A single glance satisfied Handsome Jim that the pile had been tampered with lately.

"That is the way they went!" he cried in an exultant voice. "Light a couple of lanterns, boys! We will soon have them, for they can't get out of Graveyard Gulch."

The lanterns were soon forthcoming, and in less than five minutes eight of the outlaws, with the captain at their head, were in the passage.

They went its length in much quicker time than Ben Bascom and Reckless Net had, and in due time they neared the outlet.

Then they crept along very slowly.

After a while Handsome Jim ventured out into the gulch.

There was no one there, but the remains of a fire lay right before him, and that showed him that there had been some one.

A search was at once made through the accessible part of the gulch, but without avail.

The boy and girl were not there.

"Well," observed the captain, after the ground had been gone over for the second time, "some one has hauled them up, or else they have trusted to luck and taken the underground stream."

"An' if they have done that it is their last of them," replied one of the villains, shaking his head to emphasize the remark.

Handsome Jim said nothing more. He was sure that the captives were not in the gulch, so he turned and led the men back to the secret rendezvous.

As they emerged from the small opening into the stable there was a great commotion in the inner cave.

Handsome Jim started to rush in just as several pistol shots rang out in rapid succession, and the next instant a man, hatless and coatless, dashed past them through the stable and out of the cave!

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE ESCAPE FROM GRAVEYARD GULCH.

The skeletons of the man and horse lying before him was enough to startle Ben Bascom.

He had not been looking for any such gruesome things, but he was not long in recovering himself after stepping back.

By their position on the ground the horse and rider must have tumbled over the cliff, over a hundred feet above. Death had been instantaneous, and they lay just as they had landed.

Time and carnivorous birds had eaten the flesh from the

bones, and there they lay, the ghastly relics of the life and activity.

The Boy Tenderfoot looked at them for a minute without moving; then he stepped forward and made a closer examination.

Lying a few feet ahead of the remains of the horse was a repeating rifle, and as Ben picked it up he was astonished to see what good condition it was in.

"Why, that has not been here over a week," he muttered. "Can it be possible that the man and horse have only been dead that length of time?"

He did not stop to think that it would not take the birds of prey that infested that mountainous region long to pick the bones of any one who should be so unfortunate as to lose their life and remain on the top of the ground.

They cleared off the flesh, and the wind that blew through the gulch dried the bones.

Ben was now himself, and he made an examination of the man's remains. He found that there was a brace of revolvers and a hunting knife in the belt about that portion which had been his waist.

Beyond a little rust from the rain of a day or two before, they were as good as ever, and he did not hesitate to take them.

A further search showed that there were cartridges in abundance, both for the rifle and revolvers, and they, being mostly covered by the garments of the man, were no doubt all right and fit for use.

Ben took them, because he knew they would not likely benefit any one else than himself, and walked back to the fire.

Net had just arisen to her feet as he turned to go there, and she rubbed her eyes in a rather sheepish manner, as she realized that she had been asleep for some time.

Ben smiled and bade her a cheery good-morning, after which he told her what he had found.

"It is really a Graveyard Gulch, then," she said, as she shrugged her shoulders at the sight of the skeletons, which could be seen from where they stood.

"I am going to try these cartridges and see if they are all right," remarked the Boy Tenderfoot a moment later, as he carefully wiped off the rifle and examined it to see if the magazine was loaded.

He found that there were eight cartridges in it, and not filling it any further he looked about for something to shoot at. All of a sudden he caught sight of a vulture-like bird seated high up on a point of rock that was at least two hundred yards from where he stood.

"Do you see that hawk?" he asked the girl, and when she nodded in the affirmative he raised the rifle, and taking a quick aim pressed the trigger.

"A good shot!" exclaimed Reckless Net, as the report rang out and the bird came tumbling from its lofty perch.

She ran to pick it up, but soon came to a standstill.

"I can't get it," she said. "It fell into the stream, which is running so strongly that it was whisked out of my sight almost instantly."

"A stream, eh? Why, I never noticed one. I was too much taken up with my ghastly find, I guess."

The boy walked to where the girl was standing and saw a rather wide stream of black water, which was running swiftly to what seemed a solid wall of rock.

But an investigation showed that it ran on underground, and that it went down a sharp descent as it disappeared.

Ben picked up a stick and tossed it into the water.

Away it went almost as quick as a flash, whirling on underground.

Pretty soon the young couple walked back to the fire.

"Go and get a nap," said Net. "I will be on the watch for your friend, the outlaw, to appear and get us out of here."

The boy was not willing to do this at first, but when the girl told him that she was quite capable of standing watch he consented.

He crept into the nook and threw himself on the bough of the fir tree.

In less than ten minutes he was sound asleep.

It seemed that he had never slept so sound before, and when he awoke he found Reckless Net shaking him.

"Come!" she exclaimed. "The man is here to hoist us up. Wake up, Ben Bascom!"

Dazed and confused, our hero sprang to his feet.

It took him several seconds to realize where he was. His long journey to Deadwood, and the continuous string of ad-

ventures he had passed through since his arrival had muddled him considerably.

"Hello! Hello!" a voice was calling from above, and looking up Ben caught sight of Tom Bowler standing on a ledge of rock fully fifty feet from where he was standing by the side of Net.

Then he caught sight of a dangling rope with a loop at its end.

"Hello, Tom Bowler!" he answered. "I just woke up and did not know where I was."

"Is that so? Well, I wish you would hurry up all you can. I ain't got time to tarry long. I must git back to head-quarters."

"I will send Miss Newport up first. Can you do it alone?"

"Oh, yes! I must, you know. I have no one to help me."

Bowler was a powerful fellow, and when the loop had been fastened beneath the arms of Reckless Net, he hauled her upward with apparent ease.

In a minute or so she was standing safely on the ledge, and then down came the rope again.

"Hook on!" called out Bowler, and Ben promptly did so.

Then, with the assistance of Net, he was hauled up.

"Thank you!" exclaimed our hero, as he shook hands with the man. "I shall never forget you for this. You had better go with us to Deadwood."

"Not jist yet," was the reply. "I must go back to the den an' stan' my examination before ther captain when he gits back. I will be one of 'em what will git ther blame, as I was on guard part of ther night. If I ever told a lie in my whole life I will do it this time, an' I will be doin' it for a good cause, too. I'm going to stick to what I told you, my boy—that is, if I don't git killed for what I have done."

"I'd rather you would go with us; it will be safer for you."

"Not if I kin clear myself of suspicion."

"Well, you can do as you like, of course, but you know my opinion of the matter."

"That is all right. Just follow this ledge along till you come in an open spot; you kin see ther shanties of Deadwood then, an' you will have no trouble to find your way. I'm sorry I can't git your horseflesh for you. Good-by! I'll meet you to-night, if I am alive!"

With these words the reformed outlaw was gone, and as soon as he was out of sight the Boy Tenderfoot and his fair companion started along the ledge.

As Bowler had said, they soon came in sight of Deadwood, and in less than half an hour later they were at the home of the Newports.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### GENTLE JOSEPH.

Two days later we find Ben Bascom working away on his uncle's claim.

Acting on the advice of his many friends, Lige Newport had vacated his family on the trail and moved into the town proper.

Nothing had been seen or heard of the outlaws, though diligent search had been made to find their headquarters.

Crooked Canyon was such a maze that it was next to impossible to find the cave of the villains.

It was hunting for a needle in a haystack.

Tom Bowler had failed to show up, as he said he would, and Ben thought he must have been blamed for their escape, and suffered death as a penalty.

He felt sorry for the man, for he really believed he was not bad at heart.

But he argued to himself that it was possible that he was alive, and that he could not get an opportunity to leave the outlaws' cave.

Gil Patterson and Lige Newport had reported their meeting with Bill Whistler, the red-haired man, and all hands came to the conclusion that he had been killed by the outlaws.

There were those in Deadwood who were continually on the watch for some signs of the outlaws, but nothing was seen or heard of them.

Handsome Jim was wanted, and wanted badly.

But no Handsome Jim showed up, and the poker games were run on a much more honest scale in consequence.

A couple of weeks passed.

Ben was working away with considerable luck, as his uncle was giving him a great show.

Already the boy was earning on an average about twenty-five dollars a day over his expenses, and visions of great riches were often the subject of his thoughts.

He associated considerably with Reckless Net, and it soon began to be whispered among the miners that the couple would make a match some day.

Ben was still called the Boy Tenderfoot, and many little scrapes did he get forced into by new arrivals, who were of the reckless, dare-devil sort; but he always came out on the top of the heap, and that made a host of friends for him among the honest element of the town.

Dangerous Dan's wounds had pretty well healed by this time, and though the fellow remained in Deadwood, he did not offer to bother the Boy Tenderfoot, or any of his friends.

One day, just before sunset, as Ben was standing near the post-office, waiting for the arrival of the stagecoach, which was quite a habit of the miners, two horsemen came in sight.

They were coming from the same direction the stagecoach was to come from, so they were noticed a little sooner than they would have been had they been coming from some other direction.

As they drew nearer the Boy Tenderfoot recognized one of them as Bill Whistler, the red-haired man whom he had not seen in a long time.

The other was a stranger wearing a tangled mass of yellow hair hanging down in such a manner as to almost conceal his face from view.

The horses they rode were what the miners called "cast-off plugs," and were so tired from their journey that they seemed ready to drop.

There was quite a crowd in front of the post-office, and the approaching horsemen were watched with a great degree of interest.

Just as the new arrivals came to a halt Dangerous Dan, the Dandy Duck of Deadwood, came swaggering up.

He was under the influence of whisky, and held a six-shooter in each hand.

"Whoopee!" he yelled. "Here comes ther redhead ag'in! An' he's got a long-haired lunatic with him, or my name ain't Dangerous Dan."

"Don't point them pistols this way!" cried the queer-looking stranger with Bill Whistler, as he dismounted in a hurry. "Don't do it. I don't like it."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the Dandy Duck, and then he fired a shot in the air, just for the fun of it.

Ben watched the scene with interest.

He made up his mind that if the drunken rascal undertook to go it too hard on the men he must mean it for him.

He had taken the part of Whistler before, and the Dandy Duck had suffered in consequence.

If he started up the same game again it must be that he was seeking satisfaction.

But it so happened that it was not at all necessary for our hero to interfere.

"See here, my friend!" called out Bill Whistler, pointing his finger at Dangerous Dan. "You jest let this friend of mine alone, or you'll wish you had never been born. He is called Gentle Joseph, 'cause he's so gentle an' innocent. He studied for a preacher, but give it up an' come out to ther Black Hills to make his fortune. Now, you jest let him alone, for if he happens to lose his temper you'll think a tornado has hit you."

This was, of course, very amusing to the crowd, and many were the broad grins that came over the faces of the miners.

There was hardly a man among them who did not sympathize with the newcomers, but they liked fun, and so said nothing.

The companion of Whistler appeared to be about the rankest-looking tenderfoot they had ever seen, and the crowd did not mind seeing a little fun got out of him.

They all felt quite sure that the Dandy Duck would not kill him.

And if the Dandy Duck should happen to get killed himself during the alleged fun, there would have been very few to feel at all sorry.

The drunken bully thrust one of his revolvers in his belt, and then, with an idiotic grin on his ugly visage, walked up to the innocent who had been introduced as Gentle Joseph, and deliberately tweaked his nose.

Then Gentle Joseph was no longer gentle.

As quick as the flash of a gun he knocked the revolver from the big bully's hand, and then grappled him tightly about the waist.

"Confound you! I'll wrastle the hide offen you for that!" he cried. "I'm Gentle Joseph, but look out for me when I'm riled, and I'm riled now."

Dangerous Dan made an attempt to grapple with him, but before he could get any kind of a hold he was whirled through the air like a windmill, and landed on his hands and knees a dozen feet away!

A roar of merriment went up from the crowd, and gathering himself together the Dandy Duck made a grab for his remaining revolver.

But he found that it had parted company with him when he took the sudden whirl through the air, so with a growl like that of an angry bull he drew his bowie knife.

Gentle Joseph was not the least bit afraid of him, so it seemed, for he sprang forward, and lowering his head butted his assailant in the stomach with the force of a catapult.

That settled it.

The Dandy Duck went down, and stayed down till a sympathizer assisted him to rise and leave the spot.

At this juncture a cloud of dust was seen coming up the road, and the next minute the stagecoach was seen coming with the horses at a full gallop.

"Boys, there's something wrong!" exclaimed the postmaster. "That are a stranger drivin' them horses."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE STRANGER WITH THE DARK BEARD.

There were four horses to the stagecoach, and they were coming on a full gallop, the foam flying in flecks from their nostrils.

The crowd in front of the post-office forgot all about the incident that had just taken place, and turned their undivided attention to the rapidly-approaching turnout.

As he drew up and came to a standstill the man on the driver's seat exclaimed:

"Gentlemen, I am the only one out of six who has escaped with my life."

"What happened, stranger?" inquired Gil Patterson, stepping up and taking one of the leaders by the head.

"We were held up," was the reply. "A crowd of masked men attacked us just about two miles back on the road. We made a good fight, but we soon got the worst of it. They made everybody get out and deliver up their goods, and left me for dead on the top of the coach. While they were going through all hands, I grabbed the reins and started on a wild gallop. They did not follow me far, and luckily their bullets did not hit me. The driver got shot down at the first go-off. Gentlemen, this has been the most thrilling experience of my life."

"I should say so," answered Patterson, as he sized the stranger up with a critical eye. "You are a new arrival in this part of the country, I should say?"

"Yes; right fresh from Detroit," was the reply, and then the man got down from the seat.

He was a well-formed fellow of perhaps thirty-five, with a full, dark beard, and was attired in a neat traveling suit of dark gray.

There was something about his manner which told that he was no coward, and the majority of those assembled promptly took to him.

But there were those who did not, and among them was Ben Bascom.

Ben could not help but regard the man with suspicion from the very moment he saw him.

There was something about him that suggested deception, and the boy made up his mind that he was not exactly what he would have people think he was.

The fellow gave his name as Richards, and he told such a plausible story that it seemed hard to doubt him.

He went on to say that he was one of five passengers who were in the stagecoach bound for Deadwood, and that a band of masked outlaws had held up the outfit, shot the driver, and then, while they were relieving the other four people of their cash and other valuables, he had driven off.

"I think the scoundrels shot the other passengers after I left," he went on to say. "I heard a whole lot of firing as I got away, and some cries for mercy, too."

"An' you were lucky enough to git away with a whole skin?" observed Bill Whistler. "My friend, you ought to consider yourself lucky."

"I certainly do," was the reply.

"If that had been me, I suppose I'd have got filled full of lead."

"An' me, too," chimed in Gentle Joseph.

"Well, it was one chance out of six," spoke up the postmaster, "an' this man won. Boys, let's escort him over to ther Bull's-Eye an' give him a few whiskies to steady his nerve."

This seemed to suit all hands, so as soon as the horses were turned over to the care of a representative of the stagecoach company, Mr. Richards, as he called himself, was conducted to the whisky dispensary and gambling resort owned and conducted by Soapy George.

The Boy Tenderfoot and his uncle went along with the crowd, as did Bill Whistler and the curious-looking chap called Gentle Joseph.

Everybody seemed anxious to treat the stranger who had passed through such a thrilling adventure, and in less than half an hour there was a hilarious time in the barroom of the Bull's-Eye Hotel.

While things wer getting at their height, Bill Whistler called our hero aside.

"Come outside a few minutes. I want to speak to you," he said.

Ben obeyed.

"What is it?" he asked.

"How have you been the past couple of weeks?"

"First-rate."

"So you got away from the outlaws all right, then?"

"Yes."

"And got ther gal away with you?"

"Yes," answered Ben, wondering what the man was driving at.

"How did you manage it?"

"I got the help of one of the gang. I don't mind telling you that much, but there are very few who do not know just how we did escape. I got away, and now I could not find the outlaws' cave to save my life."

"You ought to know the way to go back by the way you came."

"I do."

"You do? Well, if that is ther case, you will do me a great favor if you will put me on ther trail that will take me there—I mean by the way you come away from ther cave."

Somehow the Boy Tenderfoot had put the greatest confidence in the red-haired man, right from the very start, and now he did not hesitate to tell him the whole particulars of his escape from the headquarters of Handsome Jim.

When he had concluded Whistler put out his hand.

"Shake," he exclaimed. "You are a nervy boy. What do you say if you an' I an' Gentle Joseph take a trip to ther outlaws' cave to-night?"

"Do you mean that?" asked Ben, in surprise.

"Sure I do. Say, I'll tell you something if you'll promise to keep it a secret."

"You can depend upon me to do that," retorted the Boy Tenderfoot.

"All right!" and Bill Whistler leaned over and whispered a few words in our hero's ear, which caused him to give a start of surprise.

"I wouldn't have believed such a thing," was all he said.

"Well, now you know about as much about my business out in this part of the country as I do myself. You also know who and what Gentle Joseph is."

"Well, I am glad you possess enough confidence in me to let me into your secret."

"You are the only one who knows it. I should not have told you, only I know that you are one I can depend upon to help me. It will take a whole lot of pluck and strategy to accomplish what I want to do; but you and I and my pal, Gentle Joseph, will do it—of that I am sure. I never got stumped yet, and I don't propose to this trip. There is a whole lot of money in it for me, and when I get it I shan't forget you."

"You needn't mind that," replied Ben. "I am doing very well at mining with my uncle, and I'll help you all I can for nothing."

"Then you will go with us to-night?"

"Yes."

"That settles it! Shake, my boy; shake hands on it!"

The hands of the two once more met in a hearty grip, and then they went inside the hotel.

"Keep your eye on that new arrival," was what Whistler whispered in the ear of Ben as they went in. "I have an

idea that he is wearing a false beard. Just watch me; I am going to knock it off accidentally."

Ben waited with a great deal of interest.

Whistler managed to get pretty close to the stranger, and then just how he did it the Boy Tenderfoot did not see, but the dark beard suddenly came off the man's face and dropped upon the floor.

And then a cry of astonishment went up from the miners.

The man who had brought the stagecoach in was no other than Handsome Jim, the outlaw!

## CHAPTER XIX.

### BEN IS OUTWITTED.

The action of Bill Whistler had been so sudden and unexpected that the men in the barroom simply gaped with amazement when they saw the face of the villainous gambler exposed.

But not so with the Boy Tenderfoot! He had expected something to happen, and though it surprised him to find out that the supposed stranger was Handsome Jim, he did not lose his presence of mind.

He had his hand on the butt of his six-shooter instantly.

But Handsome Jim was a remarkably cool hand, and realizing that the jig was up, as far as the deception he had been practising was concerned, he was prepared to make a fight for his life.

He did something that no one present had the least idea he would do.

He dropped almost flat upon the floor.

But he did not remain there a single instant; he darted between the legs of the astonished miners in the direction of the door, upsetting them right and left.

Inside of ten seconds from the time the false beard was torn from his face there was a mixed pile of drunken miners struggling on the floor.

Ben Bascom made a leap for the door.

The struggling men were in the way, but that did not stop him in the least.

Like a cat he was on their backs and over them to the door.

There he stood, revolver in hand, waiting for the outlaw captain to appear.

And he had not long to wait, for Handsome Jim was very athletic, and he wriggled through that mess of miners' legs like an eel.

He came out of the doorway with a bound, and then—

He found himself staring into the muzzle of a revolver in the hands of his worst enemy—the Boy Tenderfoot.

"Hands up, Captain Handsome Jim!" said our hero calmly. "You are my prisoner!"

"Never!" was the quick retort, and then, as quick as a flash, the villain hurled himself at the boy, and before Ben could press the trigger of his revolver he was knocked off his feet.

It was an act of extreme desperation, and the villain had won!

No one is capable of receiving a heavy jolt in the stomach without having bad effects from it.

And the outlaw's head had struck our hero squarely in the pit of the stomach.

Down he went upon the ground, and away sped Handsome Jim like a sprinter in a hundred-yard dash.

Gasping for his breath, Ben Bascom struggled to his feet, just as Bill Whistler and Gentle Joseph came bounding from the barroom.

Crack! Crack! Both men fired at the receding form, but neither shot took effect, as he kept right on running.

He disappeared around the corner of a building, and the next moment the clatter of a horse's hoofs came to the ears of our friends.

"Outwitted, by jingo!" exclaimed Whistler. "Oh! If I only had been sure it was he when I knocked off that wig."

"Let us follow him," said Ben, who had now recovered his wind.

"That would be no use. I have tried that before. No, my boy, we will do what we agreed upon to-night. We can't catch Handsome Jim now, as he has got too much of a start on us. And if we follow his trail we will only lose it after we get in the mazes of Crooked Canyon."

By this time the whole crowd was piling out of the hotel.

If it had depended on them to catch the outlaw captain, he would have almost time to get a drink before he went.

"Did ther cuss git away?" asked Soapy George, who had been one of the most surprised men of the lot.

"Yes," returned Ben; "he butted me in the stomach, and caught me napping; that's how he got away. I could have dropped him dead in his tracks, but I wanted to take him alive."

"Jerusalem! But he are as daring a cuss as ever I seed. Who'd have thought he'd come around here with false whiskers on like that? An' that story of his about ther holdup of ther stagecoach—what d'ye think of that?"

"There must have been considerable truth about that, otherwise he would not have been in possession of the outfit," spoke up Gil Patterson.

"I s'pose the driver an' passengers must have went under, then?"

"Sartinly sure."

"Well, boys, it are too bad, I say. Come in an' we'll liquor up!"

All hands went into the saloon again, except Ben, Whistler and Gentle Joseph.

The two latter unhitched their horses and followed our hero to the shanty of his uncle, leading their horses as they walked.

They kept up an animated conversation as they went, speaking in very low tones.

The sun had just set behind a distant range of mountains, and the chill of the coming night could be felt.

Ben knew that it was not likely that his uncle would show up to supper, as he had started in to drink whisky with the boys, and when he once got started it was hard to stop him till he got his fill.

Then he would go for a week or two without touching a drop.

The three had nearly reached the Patterson shanty when Reckless Net came along.

She had a haunch of venison in her hands, and when she recognized Ben she came to a halt and said:

"Hello, Ben! I was just coming over to see you. I shot a good fat buck this afternoon, and I thought you might like to have some of it for supper."

"Thank you ever so much!" replied our hero, as he took the meat from her. "I just dote on venison, especially the kind you shoot."

"Now, don't give me any of your New York style of blarney; it won't go down with me. I reckon you do like venison well enough, but I don't think it makes any difference to you who shoots the deer."

"Never mind, now; you needn't believe me if you don't want to, but I spoke the truth, just the same."

There was a laugh from all four at this, and Net, with a saucy wave of her hand, went back to the shanty of her father, which was but a few yards distant.

Ben was thinking whether he had better tell her about the visit to town of Handsome Jim, but he felt rather ashamed of himself for being outwitted by the villain, and he did not do so.

"That hunk of mutton comes in mighty handy, don't it?" observed Gentle Joseph, assuming his simple manners.

"You talk as though you were hungry," said Bill Whistler.

"Well, I am."

"So am I," affirmed Ben. "We will have this venison for supper, and after that we will feel better able to tackle what is before us to-night."

"You are right on that p'int," and Gentle Joseph rubbed his stomach patronizingly.

It did not take but a minute or two to start a fire after the shanty was reached, and then all three started in to hustle up a supper.

Three thick slices were cut from the hind leg of the buck, and these, with coffee and corn cakes freshly baked on a griddle, made what might be termed a fairly substantial meal.

And when it was eaten darkness had come, and the trio were ready for business.

## CHAPTER XX.

### "PASS ON!"

Tom Bowler was not dead, as the Boy Tenderfoot thought he was. He was very much alive, and had been so all along.

But though he had managed to throw off all suspicion from him in regard to the escape of Ben and Reckless Net on that

eventful night, he had not been allowed the opportunity to leave the cave.

This rule not only applied to all the outlaw gang, but, as Handsome Jim was there all the time, it was next to an impossibility to get out.

Bowler had got back to the cave but a few minutes after the arrival of the captain and his men from their fruitless search for the boy and girl in Graveyard Gulch.

There was great excitement there when he got in.

There had been a stranger in the cave, so the story went, and he had knocked the men right and left, and shot one in getting out of the cave, which he had succeeded in doing.

The outside guard had been knocked senseless by a club, and the unknown party had darted away to no one knew where.

How he had got in the cave no one seemed to know, but as there was a small opening in the roof of the underground headquarters, and a pile of loosened dirt and small stones on the floor beneath it, they took it for granted that he must have fallen through, either accidentally or by design.

To make it plain to the reader we will state right here that the man was Bill Whistler.

He had been searching about the vicinity after leaving Gil Patterson and Lige Newport, and he had really fallen through into the headquarters of the outlaws accidentally.

It so happened that all the men were in the stable at the time, waiting for the captain and the rest of the gang to come back.

But the noise of his sudden advent in the place attracted their attention, and they rushed in just as he got upon his feet ready for action.

Then it was that he made the rush for his life, and succeeded in getting out, after he had shot one and knocked several others sprawling.

So much for that part of it.

The repairs to the roof were promptly made by the outlaws, and all that day, and many a day after they lay waiting for the stranger to come back with a gang of armed men at his back.

But he did not come, the reason being that he tried to find the place several times, but failed to locate it, on account of the fact that the hole had been covered with such a natural effect as to make it look as though it had never been touched.

Tom Bowler had been on pins and needles during the two weeks.

He had not swerved in the least from his determination to lead an honest, upright life as soon as he could get clear of the gang he was with.

He did not want to see the outlaws attacked in the cave, as he thought they would be, and if such a thing happened he meant to take the side of the attacking party at the first opportunity.

The outlaws came to the conclusion that things had died down when a whole two weeks had rolled around, and the reckless, daredevil spirit came over them again.

They longed to do some business, and they told their leader so.

"All right," said Handsome Jim, "I will take ten men with me and hold up the Deadwood stagecoach this afternoon in broad daylight. That will give the people in town something to talk about."

Bowler was not selected as one of the ten, and he felt glad of it.

He never expected to draw a gun on an honest man again.

The holdup was a success, as the men reported when they came back.

Five men killed, over a thousand dollars' worth of booty, and Handsome Jim gone to Deadwood in disguise, driving the outfit all alone.

This was the news the ten men brought in, and then all hands were united in their praise of their daring captain, who showed he had the nerve to drive into Deadwood, where there were so many who were waiting to let daylight through him.

We say all hands, but that don't include Tom Bowler.

He had changed his opinions, though the fact of it was he never really had any bad ones.

He had fled from New York because the prison stared him in the face for a crime he had never committed.

And naturally he kept aloof from honest men; he was afraid of being arrested.

"I am goin' to git out of here to-night!" he muttered under his breath, as the men were talking excitedly over the holdup and laughing how the passengers had screamed for mercy before they went under.

"It war'n't necessary to shoot ther poor devils, as far as robbin' 'em went," said one of the gang. "It war' ther captain's orders to plug 'em, 'cause he didn't want to take 'em prisoners, an' if we let 'em go they'd pile into Deadwood an' sp'ile ther game he was playin'."

That explained it to the men who had remained in the cave, and they all voted it as one of the best moves they had ever heard of Handsome Jim making.

Tom Bowler resolved to rid himself from the outlaws that night forever.

"I feel like a new man ever since that boy talked to me that night," he said, as he straightened himself up to his full height and swung out his arms.

Physically the man was a fine specimen, and if any one had seen the look in his eyes just then they could not have helped but say that he was a fine specimen of manhood in its true form.

He was not an old man, by any means, not yet having reached his thirtieth year, and there was a good show in store for Tom Bowler yet.

True, he had practised a whole lot of deception with the men he was associating with, but what mattered that? He was doing it for a good cause; he was trying to save himself from destruction.

And but for the fact that a boy from New York had talked to him he would not have thought this way.

The man left in charge felt so good over what had happened that he went the full length of his authority and ordered some whisky brought out.

Bowler liked whisky, but he had sense enough to remember that he was not himself when he was under its influence, so he pleaded that he was sick, and declined to take any on this occasion.

He was laughed at by some of the hardened criminals there, but he merely shook his head and went off and sat down by himself.

When the men had imbibed two or three horns of the fiery stuff they got real hilarious, and then it was that they began to insist on Bowler taking a drink.

The only way he had to get out of their way was to make an excuse that he wanted to get out into the fresh air.

So they allowed him to go, not one of them believing but what he told the truth.

When Bowler once got past the guard and out into the open air of the canyon, he raised his eyes heavenward, and offered up a silent prayer.

True, he had not enough money in his pockets for him to live two days in a mining town, where he would have to pay for his keep, but he had a stout heart, and was ready to do any sort of work that was honest.

"I'll strike out for ther Boy Tenderfoot," he muttered. "Good-by, you villains! I don't want to bring you to justice, because I have associated with you so long; but what happens to you now I am not accountable for. I won't lead any one to this place to hunt you out."

With this resolution Bowler started in the direction of the trail that led into Deadwood.

As much as he knew of the canyon he was compelled to move slowly, for it was now pitch dark, and he had no intelligent steed to find the way for him.

When he had made about half the distance through the canyon he suddenly heard the sounds of a horse's hoofs.

"Some one's comin'," he muttered. "I guess I'd better be on ther lookout."

He drew his revolver and halted, falling back in a cluster of rocks.

Nearer came the sounds, and presently a horse and rider came right in front of him and halted.

The horse was breathing heavily, showing that it had been taxed to its utmost, and standing there in the almost impenetrable blackness Tom Bowler waited.

The rider dismounted, uttering an oath as he did so.

"You've been a pretty fair sort of a horse, but you are nothing like my own," he heard the rider say; and then he gave a start.

The man who had just dismounted from the tired steed was Handsome Jim!

Bowler felt uncomfortable.

He did not like the presence of the man.

But he was not afraid—far from that!

If it came to the worst he would kill the captain of the outlaw band he had so long been associated with.

He had reformed, and he was now on the road to a better life.

He did not propose to allow Handsome Jim to dictate to him any longer, and he stood there hoping that the villain would go on his way.

But Providence sometimes acts queerly.

For no earthly reason, it seemed, Handsome Jim led the tired horse directly to where Bowler was standing.

The man was forced to move to escape being trod upon by the animal.

And when he moved he made a slight noise, which the outlaw captain could not help hearing.

"Who is there?" said Handsome Jim, drawing his revolver.

Then Tom Bowler stepped before him before he knew what he was really doing.

"It's me, cap," he answered. "It's me—Tom Bowler—an' I've started on ther road to an honest life! Pass right on, r either you or me has got to die!"

## CHAPTER XXI.

### IN DEATH PASSAGE.

Ben and his two companions thought it best to go on foot to Graveyard Gulch.

A horse could not be ridden over half the distance, anyhow, and they could be more secret about their movements if they went on foot.

It was a little after eight when they left the shanty and set out.

They took care to move as cautiously as possible till they got out of town.

Bill Whistler said that he was of the opinion that the outlaws had a spy in Deadwood, and it was hard telling who it was.

Consequently they had better not let any one know that they were going out.

It took them a good fifteen minutes to reach the point where they had to turn from the road and follow the rough mountain path to the ledge that overlooked the gulch.

Ben knew the way perfectly. He had been there twice since he and Reckless Net had been hauled from the grewsome gulch.

But on neither of these visits had he lowered himself down.

Gentle Joseph had a large lariat wound about his body beneath the buff-colored waistcoat he wore. It was a long one, and well adapted to the purpose they wanted to use it for.

"Are you sure you kin find ther way, Ben?" asked Whistler, dropping into the drawl he always used when in the presence of outsiders.

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "I am going by the landmarks I picked out. I'll fetch you there all right."

"How much farther is it?" queried Gentle Joseph.

"A little over a mile, I should say. It is rough walking, but we will soon get there."

They kept right on, Ben pausing now and then to make sure that he was right, and finally, after a rather tedious walk, the ledge was reached.

Gentle Joseph at once unwound the lariat from his waist.

"One of us has got to stay up here," he said, "as it won't do to all go down there and leave the rope tied up here; some outlaw might come along and cut it."

"That's so," nodded Whistler. "We will pull matches to see who is to stay here—you or me. Ben must be one to go, you know."

"All right; here is a match of full length, and here is half of one. Now wait till I turn them around in my hand a bit. There, now! Take one of them. Remember, the long match goes and the short one stays here."

Whistler reached out his hand and pulled one of the matches.

It was a short one.

"I have got to stay," he said. "All right; I'm satisfied. I won't kick against a square deal."

"I think I ought to have been in the drawing, too," spoke up Ben.

"No, you hadn't, either. You have been through the passage, an' we ain't. You must show the way."

"Very well. I am perfectly willing to do that. Make that rope fast and we will start at once."

Whistler soon had it fastened securely to a stout pine, and then taking the rope in his hands, our hero swung himself over the face of the cliff, and began to lower himself down.

There was not so much work about it for such an athletic young fellow as he, and he was soon at the bottom.

He gave the lariat a shake to let them know that he had landed, and then down came Gentle Joseph with the agility of a monkey.

"Now for the passage," whispered the latter, as he made an examination of his revolvers to see if they were ready for instant use.

The Boy Tenderfoot followed his example, and, finding everything all right, they boldly entered the Death Passage, Ben in the lead.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### HANDSOME JIM STEPS OUT.

Handsome Jim was greatly surprised when Tom Bowler loomed up before him.

"What do you mean, you infernal hound?" he cried.

"Just what I said," was the calm retort. "I'm goin' to quit ther sort of life I've been livin'. If you don't like it you had better git on your horse an' make for ther cave at once. I'm not goin' to stand ther least bit of foolin'!"

Both men had seized their revolvers. In those days when a man met with a surprise of any kind his first instinct was to grab his shooter.

A slanting ray of moonlight managed to come glinting through the foliage and fall right upon the faces of the two men as they stood there glaring at each other.

Bowler was no longer afraid of the outlaw chief. But he was afraid to make a move to shoot.

He knew that Handsome Jim was very quick at that kind of business.

"So, Tom Bowler, you deceived me nicely, didn't you? It was you who gave the boy and girl their liberty that night after all!"

"I did not give them their liberty, but I helped to get them out of the cave," was the reply, in a steady voice.

"You are a traitor!"

The words fairly hissed from the mouth of the outlaw captain.

"You kin call me what you like, Cap; but don't you try to raise that shooter of yourn; if you do, one of us will die right here."

"I guess that is about the size of it. Bowler, have you a knife?"

"Yes."

"Let us drop our revolvers and fight it out with knives, then!"

"I wouldn't trust you!"

"Would you drop your shooter if I were to let mine go first?"

"Yes."

"How can I trust you any more than you can me?"

"Because I have started on ther road to right, an' I wouldn't lie now, unless it was to save my life."

"Well, you might consider it was saving your life if you shot me after I had dropped my revolver."

"No, I wouldn't."

"Well, here goes, then!" and the revolver fell from Handsome Jim's hand to the hard ground, making noise enough to assure Tom Bowler that there was no mistake about it.

Then the man who had resolved to lead a better life kept his word.

He let his revolver fall at his feet and quickly drew his keen-edged hunting-knife.

The blades crossed above their heads as if by magic, and then the fight started.

Both were skilled in the art, but Handsome Jim was confident of being the victor.

He had been called the champion of that mode of fighting, and he felt that he could easily best Bowler.

Bowler knew of the captain's great prowess with the bowie, but he also had a good deal of confidence in himself.

He meant to cut short the career of Handsome Jim, if he could.

Then he would go on his way with no fear of being followed and slain in his sleep.

But while the leader of the outlaw band lived he would never feel exactly comfortable.

The knives clashed together again, and the tiny sparks flew from them.

Both began stepping so as to keep out of the patches of moonlight which came through the branches of the trees.

For the space of full two minutes the peculiar fight kept up without a speck of blood being drawn.

The utmost caution was displayed by the men.

One quick stroke would do the business, and they knew it only too well.

Neither was acting the part of the aggressor to any extent, but such movements could not last very long.

It seemed that the men came to the conclusion that something must be done at about the same time, for suddenly both

darted forward, and the knives were wielded with lightning-like strokes.

Tom Bowler was now rendered desperate.

Suddenly he received a sharp prick on his right arm.

His opponent had drawn first blood.

Then it was that the reformed outlaw made a lunge regardless of the fact that he was giving an opening.

If he missed it would be all up with him, for Handsome Harry would certainly deal a death blow before he could recover.

But Bowler did not miss.

The left portion of the outlaw captain's body was in a patch of moonlight as he made the lunge, and he aimed for the proper spot.

Thud! The keen-edged blade landed right at the spot, and deep into the villain's body it went.

Tom Bowler felt the hot blood gush out upon his hand and wrist, and then leaving the knife sticking where it was, he sprang back.

He knew that it was all over, and that he had won.

"Curse you, you—hound! You have—have——"

That was all Handsome Jim could get out, and then he staggered and fell to the ground.

With a shrug of his shoulders and a sigh of relief Bowler proceeded to bind up his wounded arm as best he could.

It was not much more than a scratch that he had received, but it pained him not a little, for all that.

The next thing Bowler did was to catch the captain's horse by the bridle.

"You will take me into Deadwood, I guess," he muttered.

"But," and he shook his head uneasily, "suppose I can't find the Boy Tenderfoot right away? Suppose some of the miners take me for an outlaw? Suppose I should be recognized by some one, what then?"

These were perplexing questions to Tom Bowler, and he knew not what to do.

But he mounted the waiting horse and rode slowly out of the canyon.

He concluded that he would trust to luck.

He reached the road leading into Deadwood and rode along till he finally came to the shanty the Newport family had occupied.

Bowler thought of Reckless Net, and he felt much elated when he realized that she would certainly vouch for him.

She surely had not forgotten that it was he who had hauled her and the Boy Tenderfoot from the gulch.

But it only took the man a minute to find that the shanty had been vacated.

It will be as good a place as any for me to lay low in for a while," he muttered. "I guess I had better wait till a little later to go into town; it is too early in the evening yet."

So he hitched his horse, or rather the one he had applied to his use, to a tree in the rear of the shanty, and then went inside.

The place had been entirely stripped of its modest furniture, but that made no difference to Bowler. It was a good enough resting-place for him.

Though the man had put in a good night's rest the night before, he somehow felt drowsy after he had sat down on the floor for a while.

The dull pain from the wound in his arm seemed to have a narcotic effect upon him, and in a few minutes he had worked himself into as comfortable a position as he could and was sound asleep.

Just how long he had slept he knew not, but he was aroused by a voice close to him, and as he opened his eyes he saw by the air of a lantern's ray the muzzle of a revolver pressed almost under his nose.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE CLIMAX CLOSE AT HAND.

Ben Bascom, Bill Whistler and Gentle Joseph thought that no one knew that they had left Deadwood that night; but they were quite mistaken.

Pretty Net Newport was too much concerned in the actions of the Boy Tenderfoot to allow him to run in what she thought was a needless danger.

When she gave the venison to the boy she was aware of the fact that they were going somewhere on a secret mission after darkness, because she had caught a few words of their conversation as she approached.

Reckless Net had fallen in love with Ben.

Of all the admirers she had ever had he was the only one she had taken any stock in.

It took a young New Yorker to win the heart of the reckless girl of the West.

She did not believe in eavesdropping, but thinking the brave young fellow she loved was going to run in needless danger with the two strangers she knew nothing about she crept back to the shanty of Gil Patterson, and while the three cooked their venison and talked over their plans for the visit to Graveyard Gulch she listened.

When she had learned enough she went back to her home and got her horse ready.

Then she told her father that he had better get about a dozen good men to leave town on the quiet when she gave the word.

"Ben Bascom is going to the outlaws' cave with two Government detectives," she said. "Those men who call themselves Bill Whistler and Gentle Joseph are nothing but officers of the law! They have been sent out here to break up the band of outlaws in Crooked Canyon, and they were afraid to go it alone, so they have got the Boy Tenderfoot to go with them."

"What!" exclaimed Lige Newport. "Do you mean that, my darter?"

"Yes, I mean every word of it. I listened, and that's how I come to know it."

"So them fellers is detectives, is they? Well, I must say that I thought they wasn't exactly what they made out. Gee! I guess I will get a gang together! If we kin only locate ther blamed hangout of ther gang we'll make short work of Handsome Jim's crowd afore mornin'."

"There is one man there among that crowd of villains who mustn't be hurt," cautioned the daughter. "His name is Tom Bowler; don't forget that. I have an idea that the way to get into the cave will be found to-night, so be on the lookout for Tom Bowler. He won't raise a hand against the attacking party, but will come over to your side at once."

"I won't forgit about him," was the answer. "He done you an' ther young New Yorker a good turn, an' if he is there, an' we do git a whack at ther outlaw gang, we'll see to it that he is all right. I'll tell ther boys all about it."

Having done this much, Reckless Net set about to wait for our hero and his two friends to leave.

When they did go they had no idea that they were being followed, as the reader knows.

The girl was not far behind them all along the way to the path that went up the mountainside.

Behind her came her father with a picked band of men, all allowing their horses to go no faster than a walk.

When the party came to the former residence of Lige Newport, Net signified her intention of stopping for a moment and taking a look at her former home.

She walked around behind the shanty, and found a horse hitched to a tree.

"There's some one inside," she thought. "I'll see if any of the men knows the horse."

Some of them did, sure enough, for the animal was promptly recognized as the one Handsome Jim had stolen in making his escape from Deadwood that evening.

It then became the universal opinion that the outlaw captain was inside the shanty.

After a consultation Newport tried the door and found it was not fastened.

Net was right behind him when he softly opened the door.

They could hear a man snoring, and becoming bolder, one of the men flashed the rays of a lantern in.

Then they saw a man lying on the floor sound asleep.

But they could not see his face, as his back was turned.

Newport stepped up, and in a gruff voice told the sleeper to wake up.

The moment the man arose to a sitting posture and showed his face Reckless Net exclaimed:

"Put up your gun, pop! It's Tom Bowler."

"Well, I'll be blowed!" cried the old man.

"It's me, sure enough, miss," said the reformed outlaw, as he got upon his feet. "I dropped in here to wait a while before going into town to hunt you an' ther Boy Tenderfoot up, an' I guess I must have fallen asleep. My! but my arm does hurt a little."

"Are you wounded?" inquired Net.

"Yes; Handsome Jim stuck me in ther arm, but he'll never do it agin!"

"Why, is—is he dead?"

"Yes; we met back in ther canyon, an' it was either his life or mine. I was leavin' ther outlaw gang for good an' all, an' he met me. We both drawed our revolvers at ther same time, an' we was both afraid to lift 'em high enough to shoot. We agreed to drop 'em an' fight it out with our knives. He let

his go first, an' I follered suit. Then we started in to do some fancy carvin'. I got ther best of it, 'cause I slit him through the heart. I feel better since he's out of ther land of ther livin'."

When they heard this there was not one man in the crowd who did not step forward to shake hands with Tom Bowler.

They had heard that it was he who had assisted Ben Bascom and Net Newport to get away from the outlaws' cave, and that was sufficient to make them want to shake hands with him; but now, when they learned that he had killed Handsome Jim in a duel with bowie knives, he loomed up as a regular hero.

One of them had a box of ointment that was good for wounds, and his arm was soon fixed up.

While this was being done they informed him where they were going.

"Well," he nodded, "I did say that I was never goin' back to that place ag'in, but I will, just once. I'll lead you there, an' fix it so you kin gobble ther whole bunch in no time. Come!"

"How about the Boy Tenderfoot?" asked Reckless Net.

"You said he was goin' by way of Graveyard Gulch an' Death Passage; we'll git there ahead of him."

"Oh!"

"Net, you ride on back to town," spoke up her father. "It won't be no place for you up in ther canyon when bullets gits a-flyin' round like hail."

"There won't be many bullets to fly, if you do as I say," said Bowler, who now seemed bent on winding up the unlawful career of each and every one of the outlaws.

"I'm going along, pop!" retorted the girl. And she went.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

##### CONCLUSION.

Being provided with a lantern, Ben Bascom and Gentle Joseph had no difficulty in picking their way through the underground passage.

They made much better time than did Ben and Reckless Net when they came through in their escape from the outlaws' cave.

When they were pretty near to the outlet they moved very cautiously, as they did not want to give the outlaws the least opportunity to hear them.

"What do you propose to do when we reach the end of the passage?" asked the Boy Tenderfoot of his companion.

"The idea of coming here is to find out where the main entrance is," replied Gentle Joseph. "This passage starts from the stable, you said. It is not likely there will be any of the men there continually, so when the way is clear I want to sneak out and go on a tour of investigation."

Ben nodded.

"I guess you will be able to do it, but it will be rather risky," he said.

"I know it will be risky, but I am not afraid. My partner and I were sent out here to break up this gang, and we mean to do it. If we can only locate the entrance to the blamed place it will be easy enough to lead a crowd of miners here and do the business."

"That is so."

The rubbish at the end of the passage was hardly sufficient to keep a ray of light out, and when our friends saw it they were even more cautious than before.

Then Gentle Joseph showed what an adept he was at working noiselessly.

He proceeded to pull in the short branches of trees and bundles of skins which covered the opening.

Just as he had succeeded in getting enough away so he and Ben could peer in, the sounds of a short scuffle came to their ears.

"Sh!" exclaimed Gentle Joseph, under his breath. "That sounded as though some one got his medicine. Something's up!"

There was one light burning dimly in the stable; our two friends could see the horses in their rude stalls a few yards distant, and just the other side of them the main entrance to the underground place.

While they looked in that direction they suddenly saw a number of men come tiptoeing in!

They came through the passage in single file, and then, revolvers in hand, paused in the shadows.

Ben Bascom gave a violent start.

"They are not outlaws!" he whispered. "They are our friends from Deadwood. That is Lige Newport, the father of Reckless Net, who is at the head of them."

"Well, this is what I call a coincidence," observed Gentle Joseph, who was more than surprised. "I guess we had better step out and make ourselves known."

Before his suggestion could be acted upon the men from Deadwood glided swiftly for the main cave, and then Ben saw that Tom Bowler was with them.

Like shadows they fitted by, and in another second the first of them were in the headquarters.

And still there was not a sound out of the ordinary from within.

The Boy Tenderfoot and his companion now forced their way through the opening.

They had scarcely done so when a fierce yell rang out from many throats.

For the next three minutes there was the sound of scuffling feet; two or three shots rang out, but that was all.

The surprise had been complete, and every villain in the cave had been captured save two.

They had been shot.

"Seventeen prisoners an' two dead!" exclaimed Lige Newport.

"An' Handsome Jim a corpse back in ther canyon!" added the voice of Tom Bowler.

"Hurrah for Tom Bowler!" shouted Ben, giving vent to his true feeling.

The cheers were given by the men before they realized who proposed them. But that made no difference. Bowler had slain the captain in a fair fight, and the rest of the gang were in their clutches.

The outlaws of Crooked Canyon had been caught at last.

A great scourge had been wiped from the face of the earth.

The Boy Tenderfoot and Gentle Joseph were soon shaking hands with the victorious men.

While they were thus engaged Reckless Net came into the cave.

With a glad cry she sprang toward Ben.

There was nothing left for him to do but to catch her in his arms, and he did it very gracefully, too.

The miners looked at one another in amazement. They had never seen the girl display so much tenderness before.

The crowd got ready to leave at once, and when they started Gentle Joseph insisted on going back by the way he came.

"Good-by, all!" he called out, and then, lantern in hand, he crawled into the passage.

That was the last Ben Bascom ever saw of him.

Gentle Joseph and Bill Whistler were really shrewd detectives. They had come to Deadwood to capture Handsome Jim and take him to a place where he was wanted badly.

They wanted him alive, for there was a big reward waiting for them when they could produce him.

But the jig was up!

Reckless Net and Tom Bowler had got in ahead of them.

In those days there was but one fate that could befall such a gang of cutthroat villains as the outlaws were.

The reader has often heard the name of Judge Lynch mentioned.

Well, he was the gentleman who passed sentence on them.

They all died with their boots on, and for a while there was a scarcity of rope in that section.

From that time out Deadwood began to grow amazingly.

Of course our hero and his friends had many exciting adventures after that, but there were none of them that quite came up to what happened when Handsome Jim and his band were a menace to the trails that led into the town.

When Ben became twenty-one he married pretty Nettie Newport.

When he reached twenty-five he came to the city of New York with his wife, who was by that time quite an accomplished lady, and two bright, little boys.

With them came Nettie's parents, Gil Patterson and Tom Bowler.

They had struck it rich in the Black Hills, and they had more than enough to live on the rest of their natural lives.

The last we heard of Ben Bascom he was enjoying life, health and happiness, and he was still called the Boy Tenderfoot by his most intimate friends.

"Next week's issue will contain "THE CATAMARAN BOYS; OR, THE SMUGGLERS OF LAKE SUPERIOR." By Capt. Thos. H. Wilson.

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

## CURRENT NEWS

Elnardo Cavallence, a student of the university, Princeton, N. J., may lose the sight of his right eye and his face will probably be marred for life as the result of a chemical experiment in which sulphuric acid was used. He was taken to a hospital in Philadelphia.

It is announced that the Armstrong-Whitworth Company of London has decided to develop the invention of a working miner named Glendinning, who believes he has solved the secret of safe navigation of the air. Glendinning has spent years in studying aeronautics as a member of the Balloon Society of Great Britain, and declares that an aircraft built from his designs, although weighing more than 13 tons, will sail around the world without danger of calamity and will remain aloft five days without requiring a renewal of supplies.

Chicken soup, worth \$7 a bowl, was served free the other day to 140 patients in three local hospitals in Pittsburgh. The broth was made from seasoned fowl from the cockpit. Several of the victims were numbered among the most valuable game birds in Pittsburgh. One was valued at \$500. At a cock fight raided in Turtle Creek eighteen valuable birds were made prisoners, along with a few human beings. Three of the roosters died and the other fifteen were divided among the three hospitals after being killed. An offer of \$1,000 for the birds was refused by the authorities.

The big bell of Moscow was cast in the sixteenth century, and, having fallen from its support, it was broken and recast in 1654. It was so large that it required twenty-four men to ring it, and its weight was estimated at 288,000 pounds. During a fire on June 19, 1706, it fell and was again broken into fragments, which were used, with additional materials, in 1732, to cast the king of bells, which is still to be seen in Moscow. This bell is estimated to weigh 443,732 pounds. It is 19 feet 3 inches high, and measures around the margin 60 feet 9 inches. Its value in metal alone is estimated to amount to upward of \$300,000.

The United States gunboat Machias, acting under orders of the Navy Department, on June 26 bombarded and silenced the artillery batteries of President Bordas, of San Domingo, which had opened fire on the city of Puerto Plata, although warned not to do so. Part of the city of Puerto Plata is in the hands of General Arias, head of the revolutionists, and the artillery of President Bordas opened fire in an attempt to drive the rebels out. The protest against the bombardment was made to protect the lives of Americans and other foreigners in the city. Only a few shots from the Machias were needed to silence the artillery. Many Americans were taken aboard United States ships for safety.

New York's new \$6,000,000 postoffice building, a massive pile of pink granite five stories in height and two blocks long, facing the rear of the Pennsylvania Station, is the greatest building of its kind in the world. From the curb to the topmost piece of granite is 101 feet. There are 165,000 cubic feet of granite, 18,000 tons of steel, 7,000,000 bricks and 200,000 square feet of glass in the building. The main corridor, corresponding in length to the outside colonnade, is a combination of buff marble, white plaster and glass, two stories high, 29 feet wide, and 280 feet long. There are 400,000 square feet of working space within the building.

The sugar Central Ana Maria, on the Valdez estate, near Mayaguez, Porto Rico, has for several weeks been manufacturing a white sugar direct from the cane, with excellent results. It has brought \$4 per hundred pounds in the local market, while raw sugar has been selling at a trifle over \$3. It is the purpose of the Central to make 2,000 bags of white sugar this season in addition to the usual output of raw sugar. The white sugar is made by the sulphitation process, and is intended solely for local consumption. It is packed in cloth bags containing twenty pounds each. Its flavor is nearer that of molasses than refined sugar. The grain is crystalized the same as the refined. The people to whom the first of this sugar was sold would not believe it had been made in Porto Rico until they were taken to the factory and shown.

State-wide prohibition of the liquor business in West Virginia became effective on Tuesday, June 30, at midnight. It brings the total number of States in the prohibition column up to nine. With West Virginia added, the list will be: Georgia, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, West Virginia. These nine States of total prohibition territory, and the local no-license area, according to the latest figures of the prohibition leaders, make up 2,132,726 square miles in which 46,029,750 persons, or nearly 50 per cent of the country's population, live. The 92,000 majority with which the people of West Virginia voted for prohibition was relatively the largest ever given by any State. It was approximately 2 to 1 for State-wide suppression of the liquor business. It was a surprise even to the prohibition forces, who were indebted largely to the determined stand which many of the large employers took in favor of their cause. The State has a population of 1,221,119 by the census of 1910. The mandate of the Legislature, embodied in the Yost bill, for the enforcement of the new law departs in many respects from the methods hitherto tried along this line. Under the law a Commissioner of Prohibition will see that by midnight of Tuesday, July 30, 1,200 liquor-selling places in the State have disposed of their stocks, and that thereafter all persons shall be punished by law if they keep liquor for sale.

# THE COUNT OF CONNEMARA

—OR—

## The Old Pirate's Secret Treasure

By J. P. Richards

(A Serial Story.)

### CHAPTER VI.

#### THE COUNT OF CONNEMARA.

A deafening shout arose from the pirates in the cabin as it was caught up outside.

Captain Sable fell back on the sofa and groaned in agony, while young Conamore advanced to Moya and whispered into her ear:

"Don't worry, as all will be well."

"Traitor, I'll hate you forever," answered the girl, with flashing eyes.

"You won't, for you can't. Give me a chance and I'll do in a year what your father has failed to do in twenty."

"Take the ship," cried the old pirate, "and take your new captain, as I'll never sail in the Blazer again. I know what he promised and I'll keep him to his word."

"I'll keep my word, captain," answered the strange youth, who was bleeding a little at the mouth, "if I live for a year. Keep this bullet for me, Moya."

At the time of the sea fight between the brigantine and the two frigates England was at war with France and Spain.

One month after peace was declared between all three nations.

Galway was then one of the most flourishing ports in Ireland, and the principal trade was carried on with Spain and the West India islands belonging to that nation.

Soon after the close of the war, an old gentleman and his daughter landed in Galway from a Spanish ship.

The old man gave out that he was a native of Cuba, born of Irish parents and that his name was Magnus Costello.

He wore a full gray beard reaching to his breast, his eyes appeared to be sore and weak, and he stooped as he walked.

His daughter was called Maria; and she was a charming dark-haired girl of seventeen, with eyes as black as coal, and with a clear olive complexion.

Galway was then a wealthy city, and it had many beautiful villas and mansions on each side of it.

The old Cuban soon purchased a fine old mansion near the city, with splendid grounds around it, and he embellished his home in the richest manner, saying that he would live in Ireland thereafter, with his lovely daughter.

A governess and a music teacher were engaged for the young lady, many servants were employed and horses and carriages in plenty filled the stables and coach houses.

Old Costello had letters of introduction to the best families in Galway, and he was warmly received by the hospitable Irish.

It was soon noticed that he kept aloof from the English officials in the city, and that he would not receive any of the military or naval officers at the station.

The English were masters of the country, and some of the officers resented the repulses they received.

Lord Draco, who formerly commanded the frigate Mermaid, and who had just fallen heir to the title and estate of his father, owned a splendid mansion overlooking the bay of Galway.

He was appointed warden, or head man of the port. He was a magistrate also, but he was a person of great power and influence in general.

The rich lord's only son, Myron Draco, succeeded his father to the command of the frigate Mermaid, which was stationed at Galway.

Young Captain Draco was a gallant sailor and a tall, handsome young man of twenty-three, but his countenance was slightly disfigured by a scar on the right cheek.

The close of the war did not put a full stop to the career of those adventurous rovers who infested the high seas as privateers, but who were regarded as pirates by all nations in time of peace.

It was rumored in Galway that Captain Sable had retired from the ocean soon after his fight with the two frigates, and that he had sold his fast-sailing brigantine to a rover of the famous Spanish Main.

It was also asserted that the old pirate, or privateer, was living in retirement in Spain, and that he had an immense treasure concealed in some secluded spot along the western coast of Ireland.

One of Lord Draco's first acts, on gaining wealth and power, was to offer a large reward for the capture of the old pirate.

His son then asserted that he would hunt Captain Sable down, and bring him to Galway, to force the old rogue to give up his treasure.

The young captain sailed to Spain in the frigate with a picked crew, each of whom were promised a large reward if they succeeded in capturing their old enemy.

The frigate returned to Galway again without the prize, as Captain Sable could not be found by the secret agents landed in Spain for that purpose.

When Captain Myron Draco put into the port of Galway again, the citizens of the place were in a state of the utmost excitement.

A mysterious ship flying the black flag had suddenly appeared off the coast of Ireland, to waylay the rich English merchant vessels returning from the Indies and from the Spanish Main.

The strange pirate did not molest the ships of other nations.

It was stated that the captain of the pirate ship was a black man of terrible aspect, and that the sailors under him wore sable masks when boarding the English ships.

Captain Draco put out in the frigate to cruise along the coast in search of the pirate, but he was not successful.

When the young sailor put in again, it was only to learn that the strange pirate ship had seized and destroyed a large armed merchant vessel putting out from Galway two days before.

That valuable ship and cargo belonged to his father, who was lying wounded in his mansion.

(To be continued)

# ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

## TY COBB IS FINED \$50.

Ty Cobb, the star of the Tigers, who punched a butcher and injured his (Ty's) thumb, and incidentally threatened another meat man with a revolver, appeared in the Police Court at Detroit the other day to answer a charge of disturbing the peace. His counsel, Judge Murfin, pleaded guilty for him.

"Fifty dollars fine or ninety days in the House of Correction," announced Judge Stein from the bench. The ball player's lawyer immediately produced a yellow half hundred and tossed it upon the bench.

Ty didn't have a word to say, except to answer the clerk's questions concerning his "pedigree." The incident was over before the big audience knew what had happened. Ty and his lawyer hurried through the crowd and dashed off in his motor car.

## KALGAN BURNED BY TROOPS.

An Exchange Telegraph Company dispatch from Shanghai says that the town of Kalgan, 125 miles northwest of Peking, was sacked recently.

The dispatch adds that the foreigners in the city were not harmed.

A later dispatch from Shanghai to the same company says the Chinese garrison at Kalgan, composed of 6,000 soldiers, mutinied and then looted and burned the city, killing all who resisted them. The women among the inhabitants were attacked and many of them were carried off.

The orgie of the mutinous troops lasted until daybreak, when they evacuated the city and fled toward the Mongolian border.

The population of Kalgan is estimated at 70,000. There are a number of missionaries in the city, which is a walled town of Pe-chi-Li Province, about 130 miles northwest of Peking and a short distance from the Great Wall.

On the main route from Mongolia to Peking, Kalgan is a very important center of the overland tea trade by the caravan route, and does an immense business with the Mongols. Its chief native product is soda.

The suburbs of the city are extensive and picturesque, the valley in which it stands being well cultivated.

Many Russians are included in the population of Kalgan.

## WRAP MESSAGE IN A CAPSULE.

When the commanding officer on the border of Mexico wants to send a message to a subordinate in command at a distant point, or to the firing line in a practice battle, he does not write his message on tissue paper, wrap it in a capsule, and give it to a trusty scout to deliver at the risk of losing his life.

Instead he scribbles a few words on paper, hands it to a messenger of the signal corps, and a moment or so

later the other officer, sometimes 250 miles away, is reading it. The army uses the wireless on the Mexican border. It is in the efficiency of the signal corps, and its use of the wireless, that the United States army of to-day stands far ahead of the army of years ago. Science has donated in the wireless telegraph a great aid to warfare, almost the equal of new explosives and new types of guns.

The signal corps can keep in touch with various divisions of armies with ease. The field radio-wireless section of Company D, Signal Corps, Second Division, can set up its outfit in one minute and thirty seconds. It can set up, send a ten-word message thirty-five miles, and be on the run again in ten minutes.

Then there is the "Telefunken" radiotelegraph outfit, which was brought from Germany four years ago, that country and the United States being the only nations to use it. This outfit consists of two wagons, one to carry a power plant and the other the wireless instruments. It can send or receive wireless messages 250 miles over land or sea. Two operators can take separate messages at the same time over the same instrument.

The wire section of a signal-corps company can lay or take up wire on the run, on the ground or through the water. Six miles of wire are carried on each cart.

## GERMAN AVIATOR STAYS IN AIR FOR 18 CONSECUTIVE HOURS.

Two flights at Johannisthal, which began June 23 and ended the following morning, have demonstrated that an aeroplane journey across the Atlantic is coming within the range of possibility.

The first flight was that of the German aviator Basser, who ascended at 3:49 o'clock in the afternoon and remained in the air for 18 hours and 12 minutes, thus breaking the record for a continuous flight made by the Frenchman Poulet on April 26 of 16 hours and 28 minutes.

Basser used a Rumpler biplane with a 100 horsepower Mercedes engine of an entirely new type. The machine will receive a prize of \$2,500 from the National Flying Fund.

When Basser had been flying for four hours a competitor appeared in the person of the pilot Landsman of the Schneidemühle military flying school, on an Albatross military biplane with a 70 horsepower Mercedes engine. He flew well all night, but shortly after 11 in the morning was forced to descend by a storm of rain, hail and wind after a flight of nearly fourteen hours.

Landsman traveled at a speed of 100 kilometers an hour. He was provisioned for a twenty-four hours' flight, in which time he would have laid behind him a distance equal to that between the coasts of Ireland and Newfoundland.

When Basser descended he had still over seventeen gallons of gasoline in his tanks.

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The meat inspectors in Berlin are employing the moving-picture camera in their work. They produce enlarged photographs which show micro-organisms in motion if the meat is diseased.

An electric light that will be visible at a distance of forty-eight miles is to be established at Cape Grisnez, on the French coast, opposite Dover, England. It will be of 3,000,000 candle power.

M. P. Harris, an enlisted bluejacket who recently passed the examination for admission to the Naval Academy as the candidate of Senator John Sharp Williams, was dishonorably discharged from the service for impersonating a friend and passing the tests a second time. Harris took his examination in April and later personated Thomas B. Longre of Mississippi. When Longre appeared to undergo the physical survey the fraud was discovered and he ran away. His part in the scandal has been called to the attention of the Federal authorities by the Navy Department. The offense charged is a serious one under the civil service examination laws.

A flying boat and the wireless telegraph working together proved effective means of thief catching recently in preventing the escape of a gem thief from a Florida winter resort, says Popular Mechanics. A valuable diamond brooch had been reported lost by a woman prom-

inent in New York society. Suspicion pointed to a negro hotel employee who disappeared on the day the Miami sailed, and who was reported to have been spending a great deal of money. By the aid of the wireless the negro was found to be on board the Miami. A flying boat was then brought into service and started in pursuit of the ship. The negro was found on board and arrested and then brought back to port in the flying boat.

Two men climbed historic Cumberland Mountain the other day and fought a duel that probably will result in the death of both. The participants were James "Black-head" Vanover and Anderson Estep, who had been friends and neighbors since childhood. While they fought each held the other's left hand. There were no witnesses to the duel, which is said to have been fought because Vanover objected to the attentions of Estep to his (Vanover's) sister, a pretty young woman. The men, both of whom belong to well-to-do families, met in Freeling, Va., after coming into town to buy farming supplies. Persons who saw them in conversation on the street did not notice anything out of the ordinary. Within a few minutes the men rode out of town. They went to Cumberland Mountain, near Osborne's Gap, and fought. Vanover was shot through the body twice and Estep was wounded three times in the shoulder and arms. After the fight the duelists returned here. There is little hope for the recovery of Vanover.

# THE BOY WHO DID IT

—OR—

## ALL FOR THE GOOD OF THE TOWN

By William Wade

(A Serial Story)

### CHAPTER IV (continued)

Perhaps there was a little bit of old grandfather Van Tuyle in Rod. People used to say of the old miser that whatever he once set his mind to and started in to do was always done.

And this ends our long story.

The situation is plain now.

Rod was treasure-hunting, and knowing the family history as he did he was perfectly aware that there was every reason to believe that his efforts might be rewarded with success.

Placing the lantern on the boards close to the ladder, Rod pulled at the hole until he had made it big enough to allow him to descend.

The space underneath the boards was not over three feet deep and the boy had to crouch all in a heap to enable him to get a view of it.

His heart beat wildly as he waved the lantern around.

He expected to see a trunk, a chest, a box, anything which might be supposed to contain treasure, but all he did see was an old tea-kettle.

There was not another thing in the space but himself.

Deeply disappointed, Rod seized the tea-kettle and crawled out upon the sound boards.

He was almost ready to cry. His heart had been firmly fixed upon the buried treasure; still there was a chance. It might be buried in the ground underneath the boards.

Pulling off the lid of the tea-kettle Rod peered in.

There was something in the kettle. It was a long, thick envelope, yellow with age and all water-stained.

Rod took it out and saw that it was addressed to his mother, in the well-remembered, crabbed handwriting of his grandfather, which he had seen many times.

The boy's heart began beating again, this time with hope.

Crouching down on the boards he unfolded the paper, and for the next twenty minutes remained there, reading a long, rambling narrative of his grandfather's troubles. There was not a word about the money until he came to the concluding paragraph, which read as follows:

"And so being unable to trust my cash to the safe-keeping of man, who has ever proved treacherous to me, I have buried it in the earth that it may be preserved for you, my daughter, after I am gone. Let William go to Three Pines Point down the river, where I found the old Indian mound, you will remember. I opened the mound and I closed it up again; let William open it and dig beneath the skeleton of the dead Indian chief, which he'll find there. I should have left you a million if I had not been so shamefully robbed. As it is, enough will

be found to help you out a bit and to start baby Rod in business, if he lives to grow up. Heaven bless you!

"Your loving father,

"DETMAN VAN TUYLE."

"Eureka!" cried Rod. "I have found it! My fortune is made!"

"Then, as he folded up the paper, he corrected himself by saying:

"But that depends. I shall stick to my resolution. Every dollar of it shall go for the good of the town."

### CHAPTER V.

#### ROD BEGINS BUSINESS.

Rod had scarcely got out of the well when he met Charley Cook.

Of course, the boys had their stories to tell each other, but Rod confined his to Annie Winton's affairs and said not one word about the tea-kettle in the well.

That night the boys bunked in an old barn at the end of Rod's lot, which, for some mysterious reason, had not been disturbed by the wind.

They were up by sunrise, and, like every one else in the "Vill" that morning, began overhauling the ruins to see what could be recovered.

They worked industriously for two hours and pulled out furniture enough to make them very comfortable in the loft over the old barn.

Leaving Charley to arrange it, Rod mounted his wheel, which he had been fortunate enough to discover intact, and rode to the house to which Annie Winton and her dead mother had been removed.

He found Annie wild with grief, and the interview was a most painful one.

"I shall go to my aunt at the Landing after all is over," the poor girl said, in answer to Rod's question as to what she proposed to do. "Of course, it is all up with the Vill. Everybody will move away now. Mr. Melvin says the town will never grow up again."

"Don't you believe it!" cried Rod. "It will grow up again. It will flourish more than it ever did. Mark my words, Annie, and you will see that they come true."

Annie smiled faintly.

"But, Rod, how can it be?" she asked. "Mr. Melvin says that the people are moving to the Landing as fast as they can now. He has been out looking for business, but has not been able to find one single person who proposes to stay in the Vill. Who will build up the town?"

"I will!" cried Rod.

"You! What nonsense you talk. You are only a boy. What can you do?"

"Wait and see, Annie," replied Rod, with much earnestness. "If I am only a boy I mean to show everybody that I am the boy to do it. I shall not leave the Vill and the town won't leave me."

(To be continued)

## INTERESTING TOPICS

Throwing his motorcycle into high speed when confronted by a masked hold-up man, who, at the point of a revolver, ordered him to halt and hold up his hands, James Senning, of Grand Forks, N. Dak., escaped being the victim of a daylight robbery six miles from the city the other afternoon. Senning, throwing on all his power, ran the thug down and bowled him over, while he succeeded in keeping his own balance.

The farm of Daniel Ran, at Pittsburg, Kan., is cracking and falling away. At places the ground has fallen from one to four feet. Around the edges are deep cracks or gaps in the earth. Mr. Ran doesn't know where the next crack or depression will be, and he fears that his cattle or horses or some members of his family will be injured. This information is set forth in a suit filed against the Cherokee and Pittsburg Coal and Mining Co. Ran alleges that the depressions are caused by timbering in the mine. He asks \$1,400 damages.

Starting with a pigeon that was buffeted about by the storms last December, and a mate which he bought, John Kilbane, ten years old, of Buckingham, Colo., now has a flock of six homing pigeons that he intends to make the foundation of a paying industry. The pigeon he found was exhausted from flying through the blizzard. Young Kilbane, taking the bird into his home, discovered a band on its leg inscribed "Henry Webb, Fort Wayne, Ind." He let the bird loose, but it refused to leave. Johnny kept it and hopes to become wealthy from the bird that chance threw in his way.

A \$500 free lunch was enjoyed by Spot, a small terrier owned by Frank Shepherd, proprietor of a saloon in East Ninety-second street, Chicago, and as a result the saloon was closed for several hours. The dainty tidbit which Spot devoured was nothing less than Shepherd's license. As luck would have it, a policeman entered the saloon the same morning and demanded to see the license. A few tattered shreds of it were all Shepherd could produce. Thereupon his place was ordered closed. However, when the facts were related at the City Hall some hours later the authorities permitted a duplicate license to issue.

Because he believes in Tolstoy's simple life Eleazir Kamenetzky, who came from Russia on the Hamburg, wears only a flowing robe of white, with a girdle and sandals, he is being held under observation on Ellis Island to make sure that he is sane. Kamenetzky is thirty years old, speaks nine languages and says he has plenty of money. He wears a flowing beard and long hair. He says he began the simple life after reading Tolstoy's works in St. Petersburg a few years ago. He eats only uncooked fruits, nuts and vegetables, and looks strong and says he is never ill. He tried in vain to make converts among his fellow passengers in the steerage.

Sir Ernest Shackleton, accompanied by five members of his prospective Antarctic expedition, will shortly make a practice trip over the Norwegian glaciers, in order to test under polar conditions his rations, tents, motor-sledges, and other items of outfit. The party will live on regular sledging rations, and the effects of these on the explorers will be carefully studied. The dogs which Shackleton will take with him to the Antarctic have been especially bred in arctic Canada, and are a cross between a wolf and a Scotch staghound. They are about twice as heavy as those which he used in his last expedition.

A wonderful case of memory was shown by a dove the other day at Bath, Me. A former resident, D. H. Leavitt, who has for a few years been in Portland, is visiting his son in Bath. When he formerly resided there he took much pleasure in feeding doves, they becoming very tame and responding to his whistle. He always carried a pocket full of corn and had a small army of bird friends. While walking along Center street the other morning he recognized one of his bird friends and whistled to it. The bird instantly recognized the sound and made straight for Mr. Leavitt's shoulder, seeming to be perfectly aware of his identity and very glad to see him.

Liberty Lake, Wash., boasts a cat that catches fish. Tabby makes her home close to the lake. While fishing she has that patience characteristic of other disciples of Izaak Walton. When a member of the finny tribe finally makes its appearance, with an entire absence of dread of the water this pussy will carefully and stealthily shove one front paw down the full length into the water ready for the catch. Then slightly submerging her jaws and trailing her "whiskers" in the water as a bait, she manages to attract the attention of Mr. Fish, whose curiosity aroused, comes up to investigate, when "swish," "splash," and pussy has him securely hooked on her sharp claws and trots along home.

The English polo four landed at Plymouth from the Olympic June 27. There was no demonstration of welcome, but the team is to be entertained at a dinner at Burlingham on July 4. On the same day the final inter-regimental tournament will be played before the King, who displayed considerable interest in the American contests. The Pilgrims' Club are entertaining the team with Lord Roberts presiding. Lord Wimborne in an interview said: "We could not have been more warmly welcomed in America had we been going to give a cup rather than to take one away. Perhaps I was one of the few optimists when we started. The Americans had taken note of our last trial match at Hurlingham, and I believe they underrated both our men and our ponies. The American writers admitted with fine sporting frankness that the better side had won."

## A FEW GOOD ITEMS

A country editor in Kansas thus neatly refers to an important domestic event in his town: "A handsome girl baby—which is not to be wondered at, considering its mother—came to Jim Brown's house, and will stay until she finds a better fellow than her dad, a thing that will take her many years to do."

Highly spectacular effects were produced by some recent experiments in flying illuminated aeroplanes at night in England, which proved successful. Three aeroplanes were provided with electric lights, the bulbs being spaced about the edges of the planes in such a way that when the machines traveled through the air the effect was that of parallel streaks of light. An interesting feature of the display was the destruction of a dummy battleship by bombs dropped by the airmen, demonstrating how a night attack on a naval force might be carried out. The whole exhibition suggests interesting possibilities for future fireworks displays.

Naturally of a mechanical turn of mind, the Eskimos are excellent workmen with the crude tools they manage to make from odds and ends. They pierce the hard walrus tusks with an ingenious brace and bit which is primitive in construction but very effective in practice. A strip of wood is curved like the top of a crutch, and in the convex side a hole is driven to hold a piece of hard wood which constitutes the bit stock. A drill is inserted in one end of this stock, and the curved piece placed against the operator's teeth. A bow-and-string device causes the bit stock to revolve rapidly when the string is drawn back and forth, and a clean hole is drilled in the refractory ivory in short order.

A party of Japanese spinners visited the Cotton Exchange recently. B. Sakagawa, of Osaka, Japan, one of the party, represents Japanese and Chinese cotton mills. They are here to study American methods in the spinning districts, American machinery and also to order machinery for use in Japanese and Chinese mills. Japanese steamers with a capacity of over 10,000 bales of cotton in cargo will soon be loading at gulf ports with cotton for Japan and China. They will pass through the Panama Canal to save handling, loading and overland freight charges. Japan already is on the way to be the England of the East in textile manufacture. Since September 1 Japan and China have taken 350,000 bales of American cotton, worth over \$20,000,000.

According to Prof. Arthur H. Graves of Yale University the American chestnut is doomed by the blight that has fallen upon it. "One cannot avoid the conviction," he writes, "that if the present conditions persist the virtual extinction of the American chestnut is only a question of time. In the South it is dying out where it once flourished and in the North its general condition is such that

it may soon cease to be classed as an important timber tree. How long it will survive it is of course impossible to predict with any degree of exactness. But at the present rate of decline its future life may possibly be measured in hundreds of years, but not in thousands." Prof. Graves, however, sees hope in the breeding experiments now being carried on, especially with the crossing of the Japanese and Chinese varieties, which seem resistant to the blight.

Fishermen have discovered that the East offers an excellent market for the usually despised sucker. One Michigan firm shipped three tons to New York City some weeks ago and has instructions to forward all the fish it procures. Heretofore the bulk of the suckers caught in Keweenaw Bay waters have been thrown away or donated to farmers for use in fertilizing fields. As the Lake Superior sucker subsists on the same classes of food as do other fish, and as the waters are cold until late in the summer, the ill-favor in which the fish is held in upper Michigan appears somewhat strange. But with the creation of an Eastern demand the fishermen see important possibilities. There are literally tens of millions of suckers in Lake Superior. So thickly packed are the suckers in some streams on these occasions that it actually is possible to walk dry-shod over the backs of the fish from one shore to the other.

The German army is provided with a full line of baskets made in various sizes and shapes, and used in transporting shells and cartridges. The largest sizes are made to contain one shell each, used for coast artillery. Other baskets are made in various shapes, with receptacles for shells and cartridges. J. J. Brittain, United States Consul General at Coburg, Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, which is a center of the basket industry, reports that the latest patterns for transporting shells are made with eight strips of hardwood, extending from top to bottom. The outside strips are to protect and strengthen the basket, and the inside ones to keep the shell in place. Within are placed two strips of canvas belting, attached to a circular leather bottom, upon which the shell rests. The outer ends of the strips make a sort of handle by which the shell is lifted out, the bottom resting on the leather circle. Baskets are also made with divisions to accommodate cartridges and explosives. The wood with which these are strengthened is very hard and tough, and is supplied by the government. The baskets are manufactured in large quantities, and are kept filled with shells and cartridges at the artillery depots. During maneuvers and in case of war they are taken to the front for use. Through the use of the baskets the shells and explosives are protected from contact with hard substances. Within the past few years upward of 1,500,000 baskets have been made for the German army. Large deliveries of baskets have also been made to Austria and Turkey, and sales to the British government are anticipated.

# PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, JULY 22, 1914.

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## GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Gen. Francisco Villa soon will have a \$1,000 porcelain bathtub. A firm in Chicago has filled the rebel leader's order and has shipped the tub to Juarez. It is believed that Villa plans to carry his new tub to Mexico City, where he hopes to substitute it for that now used by Huerta.

An "arson squad" of militant suffragettes caused extensive damage recently to the Episcopal Church at Ballylessen, near Belfast. The destruction of the entire church was averted only by the arrival of the sexton, who succeeded in extinguishing the blaze. He found quantities of burning petroleum, fire lighters, grease and cotton wool littered around, while the woodwork of the building had been thoroughly drenched with petroleum.

County Road Supervisor Seymour Pullis, of Milton, N. J., has had trouble recently with prisoners who refused to work, on the ground that it was too hot to toil in the sun. When a gang of prisoners refused to lift pick or shovel, the supervisor had the obstinate ones chained to a steam roller and compelled them to keep walking behind the cumbersome machine. Some of them begged to be put back at their old work after plodding along behind the steam roller for a few hours, but others sullenly refused to give in.

A remarkable incident of the visit of the King and Queen to Nottingham was disclosed at the local police court recently when Irene Casey was brought up on a charge of loitering with intent to commit a felony. Shortly before the arrival of the King and Queen, Irene Casey was observed examining the grandstand in the market place. In her hand she carried a green dress case. Detectives arrested her and took her to the police station, where it was found that the dress case contained, among other things, four quarter-pound packets of the explosive called cheddite and twenty feet of fuse. The woman behaved violently when the magistrate remanded her. She seized the front rail of the dock and clung with such determination that she had to be wrenched away and forcibly removed to the cells.

The new \$200,000 dormitory at Princeton, the gift of the classes graduating from 1902 to 1912, will be in the form of the letter L. It will be of stone such as that used in Cuyler, Holder and the Graduate College. The site, while somewhat crowded against the Art Museum, is designed to meet the increasing demand for centrally located rooms. The rooms in the new dormitory will be moderate-priced. There will be five double entries, with accommodations for 140 men. Most of the rooms will be rented for not more than \$75 a year. In general the building will conform to the design of Cuyler dormitory. The long section of the building will extend north and south along the present walk leading from the upper campus to Brown Hall.

## GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"While I was abroad I witnessed a duel in France." "Anybody hurt?" "Yes; one of the principals had a rib broken embracing the other after the combat was over."

Eastern Man—"How are things in Dugout City now?" Western Man—"Booming, just a-booming; why, I happened to want a little spending money last week, and it didn't take me half an hour to get a third mortgage on my house."

The fervent temperance orator stopped in the midst of his speech and said impressively: "My friends, if all the saloons were at the bottom of the sea what would be the inevitable result?" And from the back of the room came the loud emphatic reply: "Lots of people would get drowned!"

General Horace Porter once told the following: "In the mountains of New Hampshire I met one of the colored troops driving a stage on a country route, and asked him his name." "George Washington, sah," was the answer. "I said: 'That name is well known to everybody in this country.'" "I reckon, sah, it ought to be. I'se been drivin' heah evah since de wah."

Sam met Joe on the way to their morning work and said: "Say, Joe. You knows dat niggah, Ed? Well, what you think that fool gone and done? Why, dat fool nigger gone and bought a razzar." "Well, I dunno," said Joe; "a razzar am a mighty handy instrument to hab in emergency." "Shore! Shore!" replied Sam. "But this fool nigger done gone an' bought a safety razzar."

An Irish merchant who had more money in his pocket than his appearance denoted, took a seat in a first-class carriage. A dandy fellow passenger was much annoyed at Pat's presence, and, missing his handkerchief, taxed him with having picked his pocket. After recovering the handkerchief, which he had put in his hat, he made a lame apology, but Pat stopped him with the remark: "Make yourself easy, darlint; don't bother about the matter. You took me for a thafe, I took you for a gentleman. We were both of us mistaken, that's all, me honey."

# THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

## WINS \$2,000 AT HARVARD.

Pittman Benjamin Potter, of Long Branch, N. J., in addition to winning the Palfrey exhibition given yearly to the senior whose four years at college have shown the best results, has found time during his stay at Harvard to earn more than \$2,000 in scholarship and prize awards. Potter held the Gambrill scholarship of \$525 the last year, and, in addition, won the Sumner and Bennet prizes in political science, which netted him \$175 more.

The Palfrey exhibition carries an award of \$100 and a scholarship for next season in Paris, \$400, giving the Jersey man an income of \$1,200 the last year. As a junior Potter won the Saltonstall scholarship, with \$525 attached to it, and the previous year won the \$200 Wendell scholarship. As a freshman he won \$250 and a betur.

## STILL PREACHING AT 111.

Stooping under the weight of years—111, to be precise—the Rev. M. A. Cox, who lives near Almena, Kan., hitches up his team each Sunday and drives to the Methodist church. He ties his team, posts himself at the door and receives the churchgoers as they file past. He is pastor of the church.

Although Mr. Cox will soon be 112 years old, he still retains his vim as a preacher. He has been preaching for forty years. Those who heard him when he was a tyro and have heard him recently say his ability has increased rather than declined.

Mr. Cox was born July 19, 1802. He is the father of eleven children, three of whom are dead. The eight surviving are five sons and three daughters. He is the grandfather of forty-five children and the great-grandfather of twenty-nine. A few months ago he became a great-great-grandfather when one of his great-granddaughters in Portland, Ore., became the mother of a little girl.

## KEEP AWAY FROM CANADA.

"The world-wide financial stringency" has caused the curtailment of constructive work in Canada, according to official warning from the Canadian government to the steamship and railway agencies in England, who are advised that artisans and laborers should "postpone coming to Canada until normal conditions again prevail."

There are still "many excellent openings for farmers with capital," states the circular, and "the demand was never stronger for farm laborers and female domestic servants than at present." Immediate employment is promised this class of workers.

An employment list for the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, issued by the Department of the Interior, shows that the yearly wages offered farm hands, in addition to board and lodging, ranged from \$100 to \$220 a year, the average being about \$150. Monthly pay during the summer season varies from \$10 to \$30 with board. Domestic servants are promised from \$10 to \$12 a month, or "according to ability."

## NEGROES MAKE IMMENSE PROGRESS.

Negro farmers own or control 5,100,000 acres of land in the State of Alabama, or 350,000 more acres than they controlled in 1900. The colored farmers of the State have under their control 3,563,000 acres of improved land, and are farming 500,000 more acres of improved land than they were cultivating in 1900. In ten years the number of negro farmers increased 17.8 per cent., and now they own or control one-fourth of all the farm property in Alabama, having an aggregate value of \$97,370,000, or 107.5 per cent. more farm property than they controlled at the beginning of the ten-year period.

The progress of the negroes in Alabama is typical of what the negroes are doing in other States. With its colored population of 908,282, the third greatest negro population in the United States, Alabama affords a striking illustration of what the race has accomplished.

The first negro bank in the United States was established in Alabama. In the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, of which Booker T. Washington is head, it possesses the leading negro educational institution of the world. Now Alabama has the first railroad in America to be conceived, promoted, built and operated by negro people, namely, the Dixie Line, running from Kowalaga Community, colored, fifteen miles to Alexander City, in the eastern part of the State, where it connects with the Central of Georgia Railroad.

In agriculture, however, they are making the most progress. Fifty per cent. of all the persons in the State engaged in agriculture are negroes. On the other hand, 75 per cent. of all the negroes in the State are engaged in farming. There are 110,440 colored men operating farms.

The banking business is another line in which the negroes of the State are making progress. There are five banks in Alabama operated by negroes, the Alabama Penny Savings Bank and the Prudential Savings Bank of Birmingham, the Penny Savings Bank of Selma, the Penny Savings Bank of Anniston and the Penny Savings Bank of Montgomery. A remarkable increase is shown during the ten years in the number of negroes who have established successful grocery stores, drug stores, real estate offices, and other enterprises. In practically every city in the State where there are large numbers of colored people they have acquired the ownership of entire city blocks.

The negro church has kept pace with the progress of the negro in agriculture, commerce and education. In every city in Alabama where there is a large community of negroes they have built churches costing \$20,000 to \$50,000. The value of the church property owned by colored people of the State amounts in all denominations to \$4,000,000. Thus with the physical progress of the negro churches of Alabama has come intellectual and moral advancement.

## ITCH POWDER.



Gee whiz! What fun you can have with this stuff. Moisten the tip of your finger, tap it on the contents of the box, and a little bit will stick. Then shake hands with your friend, or drop a speck down his back. In a minute he will feel as if he had the seven years' itch.

It will make him scratch, rear, squirm and make faces. But it is perfectly harmless, as it is made from the seeds of wild roses. The horrible itch stops in a few minutes, or can be checked immediately by rubbing the spot with a wet cloth. While it is working, you will be apt to laugh your suspender buttons off. The best joke of all. Price 10 cents a box, by mail, postpaid.

**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

## GOOD LUCK BANKS.



Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nickle-plated brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c. by mail.

**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

## CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.



The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c.

**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

## LIGHTNING TRICK BOX.



A startling and pleasing illusion! "The ways of the world are devious," says Matthew Arnold, but the ways of the Lightning Trick Box when properly handled are admitted to be puzzling and uncertain. You take off the lid and show your friends that it is full of nice candy. Replace the lid, when you can solemnly assure your friends that you can instantly empty the box in their presence without opening it; and taking off the lid again, sure enough the candy has disappeared. Or you can change the candy into a piece of money by following the directions sent with each box. This is the neatest and best cheap trick ever invented.

Price, only 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid.  
**M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.**

## LAUGHABLE EGG TRICK



This is the funniest trick ever exhibited and always produces roars of laughter. The performer says to the audience that he requires some eggs for one of his experiments. As no spectator carries any, he calls his assistant, taps him on top of the head, he gags, and an egg comes out of his mouth. This is repeated until six eggs are produced. It is an easy trick to perform, once you know how, and always makes a hit. Directions given for working it. Price, 25 cents by mail, postpaid.

**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

## X-RAY WONDER



This is a wonderful little optical illusion. In use, you apparently see the bones in your hand, the hole in a pipe-stem, the lead in a pencil, etc. The principle on which it is operated cannot be disclosed here, but it will afford no end of fun for any person who has one. Price, 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

## VANISHING CIGAR.



This cigar is made in exact imitation of a good one. It is held by a rubber cord which, with the attached safety pin, is fastened on the inside of the sleeve. When offered to a friend, as it is about to be taken, it will instantly disappear.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.  
**C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

## Ayvad's Water-Wings



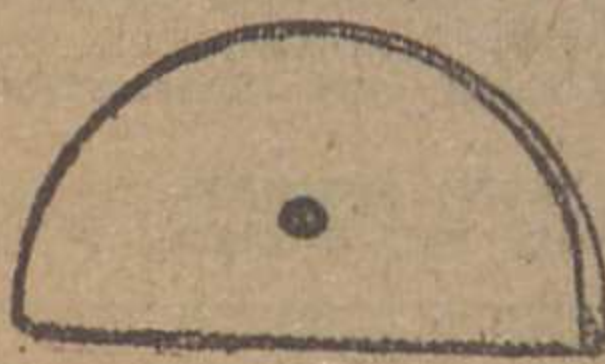
## Learn to swim by one trial

Price 25 cents, Postpaid

These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-handkerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pair anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two marks under the mouthpieces.

**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

## WHISTLEPHONE



This is one of the greatest musical instruments ever invented. It is made entirely of metal and is almost invisible when in use. With it, in a few moments, you can learn to play all kinds of tunes, have lots of fun, please and amuse your friends and make some money, too. Fine for either song or piano accompaniment or by itself alone. You place the whistlephone in the mouth with half circle out, place end of tongue to rounded part and blow gently as if to cool the lips. A few trials will enable one to play any tune or air.

Price 6 cents each by mail, post-paid  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

## CARTER AEROPLANE No. 1.



Will fly on a horizontal line 150 feet! Can be flown in the house, and will not injure itself nor anything in the room. The most perfect little aeroplane made. The motive power is furnished by twisted rubber bands contained within the tubular body of the machine. It is actuated by

a propeller at each end revolving in opposite directions. Variation in height may be obtained by moving the planes and the balance weight. It can be made to fly either to the right or the left by moving the balance sideways before it is released for flight. Price, 35c. each, delivered.

**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

## THE JOKER'S CIGAR.



The biggest sell of the season. A real cigar made of tobacco, but secreted in the center of cigar about one-half inch from end is a fountain of sparklets. The moment the fire reaches this fountain hundreds of sparks of fire burst forth in every direction,

to the astonishment of the smoker. The fire is stage fire, and will not burn the skin or clothing. After the fireworks the victim can continue smoking the cigar to the end. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c.; 1 dozen, 90c., mailed, postpaid.  
**C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

## SLIDE THE PENCIL.



The pencil that keeps them guessing. Made of wood and lead just like an ordinary pencil, but when your victim starts to write with it—presto! the lead disappears. It is so constructed that the slightest pressure on the paper makes the lead slide into the wood. Very funny and a practical joke.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c.  
**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

## PIGGY IN A COFFIN.



This is a wicked pig that died at an early age, and here he is in his coffin ready for burial. There will be a great many mourners at his funeral, for this coffin, pretty as it looks, is very tricky, and the man who gets it open will feel real grief. The coffin is made of metal, perfectly shaped and beautifully lacquered. The trick is to open it to see the pig. The man that tries it gets his fingers and feelings hurt, and piggy comes out to grunt at his victims. The tubular end of the coffin, which everyone (in trying to open) presses inward, contains a needle which stabs the victim in his thumb or finger every time. This is the latest and a very "impressive" trick. It can be opened easily by anyone in the secret, and as a neat catch-joke to save yourself from a bore is unsurpassed. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., postpaid; one dozen by express, 75c.

**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**Old Coins Wanted.** \$1 to \$600 paid for hundreds of coins dated before 1895. Send 10c for our illustrated coin value book, 4x7; get posted. **Clark & Co., Box 95, Le Roy, N. Y.**

## BLACK-EYE JOKE.



New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

## THE MAGIC DAGGER.



A wonderful illusion. To all appearances it is an ordinary dagger which you can flourish around in your hand and suddenly state that you think you have lived long enough and had better commit suicide, at the same time plunging the dagger up to the hilt into your breast or side, or you can pretend to stab a friend or acquaintance. Of course your friend or yourself are not injured in the least, but the deception is perfect and will startle all who see it.

Price, 10c., or 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid.  
**C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

## THE FIGHTING ROOSTERS.



A full blooded pair of fighting game cocks. These diminutive fighters have real feathers, yellow legs and fiery red combs, their movements when fighting are perfectly natural and lifelike, and the secret of their movements

is known only to the operator, who can cause them to battle with each other as often and as long as desired. Independent of their fighting proclivities they make very pretty mantel ornaments. Price for the pair in a strong box, 10c.; 3 pairs for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

## SURPRISE KINEMATOGRAPH.



The greatest hit of the season! It consists of a small metal, nickle-plated tube, with a lens eye view, which shows a pretty ballet girl in tights. Hand it to a friend, who will be delighted with the first picture; tell him to turn the screw in center of instrument

to change the views, when a stream of water squirts into his face, much to his disgust. Anyone who has not seen this kinematograph in operation is sure to be caught every time. The instrument can be refilled with water in an instant, ready for the next customer. Price 25c. by mail, postpaid.

**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

## MICROSCOPE.



By use of this wonderful little microscope you can magnify a drop of stagnant water until you see dozens of crawling insects; is also useful for inspecting grain, pork, linen, and numerous other articles. This little instrument does equally as good work as the best microscopes and is invaluable to the household. Is made of best finished brass; size when closed 1x2 1/2 inches. Price, 30c.

**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

## TRICK PUZZLE PURSE.



The first attempt usually made to open it, is to press down the little knob in the center of the purse, when a small needle runs out and stabs them in the finger, but does not open it. You can open it before their eyes and still they will be unable to open it.

Price, 25c. each by mail, postpaid.  
**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

## MANY TOOL KEY RING.



The wonder of the age. The greatest small tool in the world. In this little instrument you have in combination seven useful tools embracing Key Ring, Pencil Sharpener, Nail Cutter and Cleaner, Watch Opener, Cigar Clipper, Letter Opener and Screw Driver. It is not a toy, but a useful article, made of cutlery steel, tempered and highly nickle-plated. Therefore will carry an edge the same as any piece of cutlery. As a useful tool, nothing has ever been offered to the public to equal it. Price, 15c., mailed, postpaid.

**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

### THE FOUNTAIN RING.



A handsome ring connected with a rubber ball which is concealed in the palm of the hand. A gentle squeeze forces water or cologne in the face of the victim while he is examining it. The ball can be instantly filled by immersing ring in water same as a fountain pen filler. Price by mail, postpaid, 12c. each.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

### TRICK FAN.



A lady's fan made of colored silk cloth. The fan may be used and then shut, and when it opens again, it falls in pieces; shut and open again and it is perfect, without a sign of a break. A great surprise for those not in the trick. Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

### STAR AND CRESCENT PUZZLE.



The puzzle is to separate the one star from the linked star and crescent without using force. Price by mail, postpaid 10c.; 3 for 25c.

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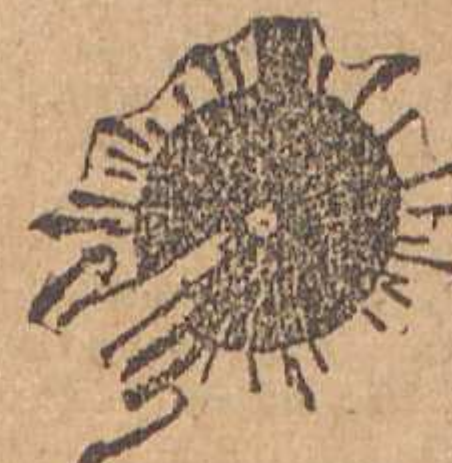
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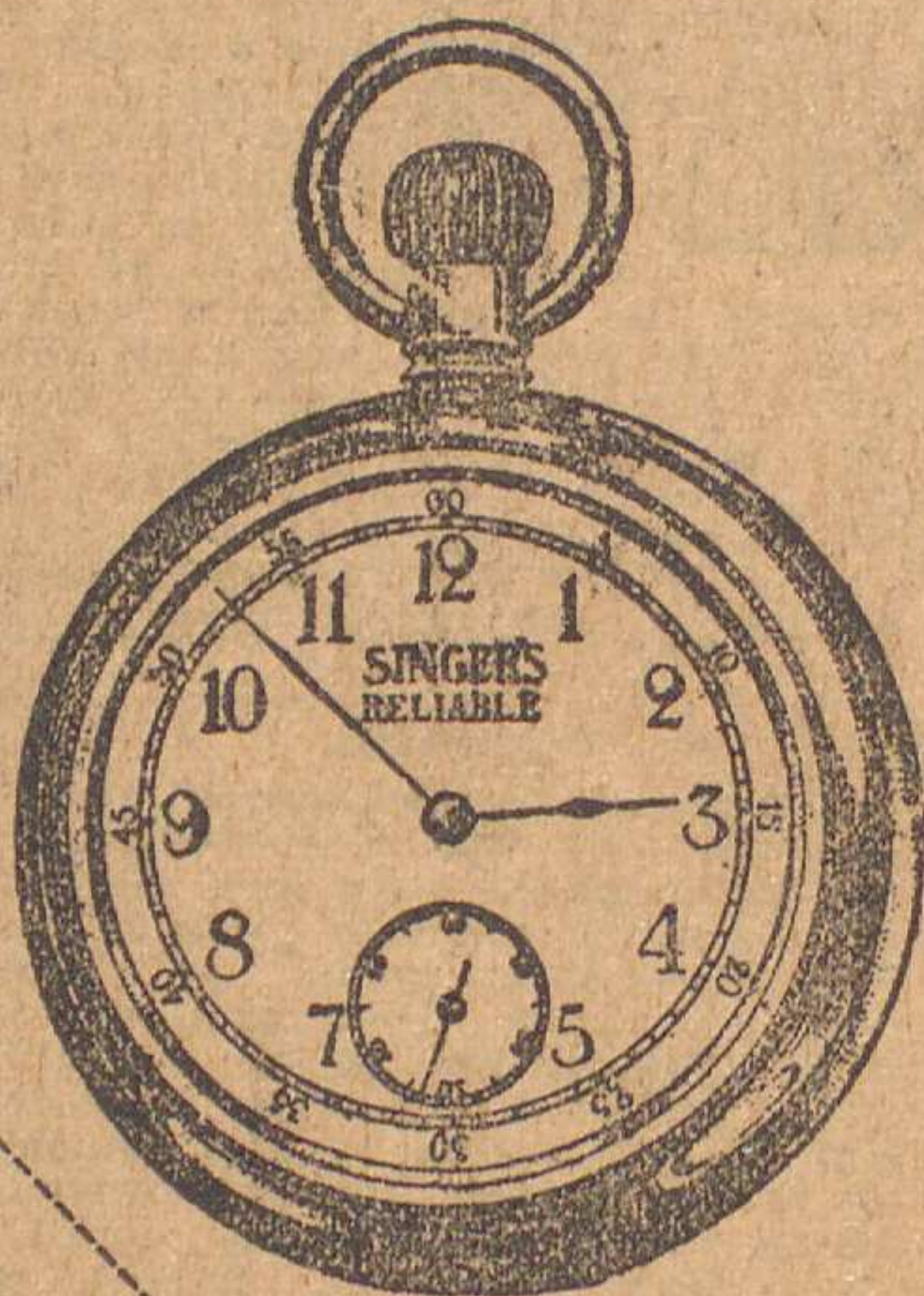
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